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A MEMORIAL OF THO: BUSH ESQR

49.756.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

EXEMPLIFIED,

OR

A Memorial

OF

THOMAS BUSH, ESQ.,

LATE

OF LAMBORNE, BERKS.

"Such is the soul that leaves this mortal land,
Fearless when the great Master gives command;
Death is the storm; she smiles to hear it roar:
* * * * * * *
* * * And as she sails she sings,
And loses by degrees the sight of mortal things.
* * * * * * *
Now vast eternity fills all her sight,
She floats on the broad deep with infinite delight,
The seas for ever calm, the skies for ever bright."

WATTS.

LONDON:
MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
LEWIS, WANTAGE.

1849.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

PREFACE.

The following MEMORIAL has been prepared under the impression, that an example like that of Mr. Bush should be made to exert on the world an influence as extensive as possible. Our own characters are powerfully influenced, and principally formed, often unconsciously, by the characters of these who live around us, or who have lived before us. Piety is never seen so clearly, and never appears so lovely, as when embodied in a holy example. For this reason, it is likely, that no species of literature is so powerful for the formation of holy characters, as the biography of holy persons.

It was, indeed, expected that a memoir of Mr. Bush would, before this, have appeared in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. Such an account, however, has not yet appeared; nor would it be possible to give a full

delineation of such a character as that of Mr. Bush, in the usual space allotted to biography in that periodical. Besides, it was hoped that something in a separate form would reach the hands of many by whom the Magazine is not read.

The materials have been drawn from personal, and, for some years intimate acquaintance,—from information supplied by those who have known him for many years,—and from his own letters and entries. It is a matter of regret, that he kept no regular record of religious experience and practice. There are a few entries, written in an abreviated manner, sometimes with intervals of years between each; these have been used so far as they were available. In the extracts from his correspondence &c., alterations of expression have been made; but, it is believed, that in no case has the meaning been changed.

Few incidents marked his life. The absence of these renders the task of the Biographer more difficult,—deprives the work of much that would be interesting: but, perhaps, makes it not less useful. If the end of biography is to delineate character so as to lead to imitation, it is most useful when the excellencies of the departed can be most easily copied into our own characters and lives;

and this can be best done when they are placed in circumstances most like our own.

Romantic incident can distinguish the lives of the few only,—real usefulness may be possessed by all. One who knew the subject of this memoir for several years, remarks,—"I know of no striking incident in his history, he seems to me to be one of those whose career resembled the steady shining of the Sun, rather than the glare of the fortuitous meteor." His "path" was "as the shining light that shineth more and more until the perfect day." What is more an every day occurrence than the sun-shine? And what so useful?

The writer has endeavoured to secure perfect correctness in his statements. Should he have failed in any particular, he will be thankful for any *correction* or *additional information* communicated to him through the medium of the printer.

With reference to the mode in which he has performed his work, he can only say, "he hath done what he could." More satisfied he would have felt, had the memoir been more worthy of its subject; but such as it is he sends it forth with the prayer that it may assist to produce many similar characters.

The black profile prefixed is the best likeness of him which exists; it is thought to give a correct outline of the countenance.

He has only to add that should any profits arise from the publication, they will be employed in carrying out the benevolent plans of Mr. Bush. The printer, to promote the same objects, does his work without profit.

The reader will oblige by correcting with his pen the following

ERRATA.

Page 3, line 4, for 1768 read 1786
„ 42, „ 11, „ accidental „ incidental
„ 96, „ 19, „ numerable „ numerous

ADDENDUM.

To letter page 108, add—"Lambourn, Aug. 21st 1839."

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

EXEMPLIFIED, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

In the village of Childrey, Berks, about three miles from the town of Wantage, stands an ancient dwelling. Its stone window-frames and arched door-ways afford evidence of its former grandeur. It was probably built in the 15th century. From the time of Henry VI., whose reign commenced in 1422, to that of Charles II. in 1661, or later, it was inhabited by an ancient family named Fettyplace. Sir Thomas Fettyplace resided here in 1436. In a room in this building Charles I. slept on the night of April 9th, 1644, on his march from Oxford to Marlborough. For more than a century, a portion of the building has been the residence of the farmers who have successively rented the estate:

a part is now inhabited by poor people. About the year 1756, it was the dwelling of a farmer named Tame. In this house, and in that year, was born Martha Tame, the mother of Thomas Bush.

His father, who was also named Thomas Bush, was born in the same parish, and probably in the same year.

At the birth of Thomas, his parents resided on a farm in the neighbouring village of Letcombe-Regis. Tradition says, King John was born in this village; and that it derives from this circumstance its name of Letcombe-Regis, or the King's Letcombe. King John, however, is said to have been born at the King's manor house at Oxford, December 24th, 1166. The village and manor were once a part of the royal demesne, and probably from this circumstance the name was derived. An ancient Church, near it a neat Wesleyan Chapel, a few genteel residences, including the dwelling and park of Thomas Goodlake, Esq., and the cottages of the labourers, at the present time constitute the village.

It is skirted by a rivulet rising in the adjoining village of Letcombe-Bassett. The population in 1841 amounted to 446. Here, in a farm house, on the eleventh of October, 1768, was born Thomas Bush.

In the same house his father died, November 7th, 1795, aged 39, and was buried at Childrey. Thomas was the only child living. There had been another son, but he died in infancy. At this period, therefore, "he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." This circumstance will account, in part, for the strong attatchment subsisting between the son and the mother through life.

The early education of the subject of this memoir was under the superintendance of Mr. Jennings, who then kept an excellent school at Wantage. It included the usual branches of a good English education. To nothing beyond this did Mr. Bush ever make pretensions. His mind, however, in subsequent life, was richly cultivated by extensive and varied reading.

His father had purchased an estate at Lamborne, about seven miles from Letcombe-

Regis. To this place the family removed in the year 1800, a year called by farmers "the dear year," because corn brought a very high price. The family at this time consisted of Mrs. Bush, Mr. Tame, her brother, and Thomas. About this period he spent a great part of one year with a relative then residing at Sparsholt. He was then fourteen years of age.

Lamborne is situated sixty-five miles west of London, "in a pleasant open country, near the edge of the chalk downs which intersect this district. It is an ancient place, but contains many neat modern houses. It is well supplied with water." Hills rise around the town at different distances. The Rev. Wm. Pollard happened to visit the place for the first time, when a fog rested on it, and standing on the hill which descends into the town from Hungerford it appeared, to use his own expression, "a place surrounded by the hills and shut in by the heavens." The river Lamborne rises near the town, and after winding pleasantly for about twelve miles, joins the Kennet at Newbury. The Lamborne, near its source, is said to have

the singular property of being full and clear during summer, and almost dry in winter. Perhaps, a truer statement is, that the stream is nearly equal through the year. In 1801 the inhabitants of the town numbered 964. Those of the parish, which includes the neighbouring hamlets of Bockhampton, Eastbury, and Up-Lamborne, 2045. In 1831 the number in the town had increased to 1166; in the parish to 2386. At the north end of the place, leading towards Wantage, stands the house in which Mr. Bush from this period spent the remainder of his days. The farm is called North Farm.

Concerning his character at this time little is recollected. His disposition was naturally cheerful. He would sometimes play at cards; and occasionally indulge in a laugh at the Methodists. Many have been the instances of those who have laughed at that which they have afterwards heartily embraced. A laugh is the offspring of thoughtlessness. To embrace what is despised, implies deliberate choice arising from full conviction; and full conviction arising from careful examination.

Methodism was introduced into Lamborne about the year 1797 or 8. An old Local Preacher, named Spanswick, from the neighbouring village of Eastbury, was accustomed to preach at Lamborne. The first services were held in a cottage, then standing on the ground connected with the present Chapel. It was inhabited by an old woman of the name of Betty Bowsher, who, although in humble life, rendered useful service to the cause of God. An out-building belonging to the Cottage used for fuel, &c., was afterwards enlarged and repaired and transformed into a preaching house.

Methodism in common with true religion in every age has generally had her history marked by persecution. She was cradled in the storm, and hence derived her healthy vigour. May the calm and the sunshine never enfeeble her! In Lamborne the little church had to endure trial of cruel mockings, but no scene of actual violence is remembered. On one occasion this appears to have been designed ; the design however terminated in the increased strength of the church.

In 1805, the Rev. Robert Wheeler was stationed at Newbury. Lamborne was then a part of the Newbury Circuit. Mr. Wheeler's ministrations were powerful: sinners were converted. One evening, when he was preaching, a person, named Martin, moving in respectable life, but addicted to hunting, drinking, and similar dissipating practices, went, dressed in a hunting dress with his pockets full of stones, intending to throw them at the minister. Mr. Wheeler, observing this man and his associates, broke off in the midst of his sermon and proposed prayer for them especially. Martin could not stand the prayers of the minister and the congregation. He felt, he said, as if his pockets full of stones would sink him through the floor into hell. Earnestly did he wish that some one would cut off his pockets. One by one were the stones dropped on the floor of the crowded Chapel. His concern was visible. The story about Martin was quickly noised through the town. From this time he became a changed character and joined himself to the church of God. He first led Mr. Bush to a Methodist Chapel.

We now approach a most important period in Mr. Bush's life: the period in which he devoted himself to God. Religion is *personal.* The entrance on religion is by "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."[a] Repentance and faith are binding on all. "He commandeth all men every where to repent."[b] "He that believeth not shall be damned."[c] These are *personal* acts. Repentance is conviction of sin, sorrow for sin, turning from sin. Faith is the trust of the penitent soul on God's mercy through Christ. The Bible knows nothing of any faith productive of saving effects but *personal* faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."[d] Thus saving faith is not only an act of the intelligent mind, but also an act of the penitent heart. The man who recollects in his own history no such exercises as personal repentance, and personal trust in Christ, is yet in experience and practice unacquainted with religion. To the exercise of personal repentance and faith was Mr. Bush now led. The change produced at this period

a Acts xx. 21. b Acts xvii, 30, c Mark xvi. 16. d Rom. x. 10.

gave an entirely new character to his life, and will spread its influence through eternity.

A severe illness produced anxiety about his Soul. "What," thought he, "have I done for God since I was born?" This anxiety led to a more serious attention to religious exercises. Alarming circumstances, used by God's Spirit, may arouse the conscience; but the Gospel alone can sooth and pacify. To such a soul it comes, and offers Salvation through faith in the atonement of Christ. This Gospel he first heard clearly announced in a Methodist Chapel. The following particulars have been communicated. Mr. Martin while walking near the house, observed Mr. Bush engaged in the garden, and expected some jocose remark about Methodism. Mr. Bush on the contrary expressed a desire for serious conversation with him. On going into the house he described the state of his mind. Martin, surprised and gladdened, proposed prayer. They prayed, and Martin invited him to the Methodist Chapel. He consented; but not without a struggle with pride did he enter the humble Sanctuary of a despised people. Just

within the Chapel there were at that time two pillars, and behind one of these pillars he attempted to conceal himself. The first verse he heard sung arrested his attention and deeply impressed his Soul;

> "But all, before they hence remove,
> May mansions for themselves prepare
> In that eternal house above;—
> And, O my God, shall I be there?"

Shall I be there? That was the question which he then eagerly asked himself. Shall I be there? That was the doubt which then agitated his heart. He continued to attend; the way of Salvation by faith was clearly described, and here he sought and obtained redemption in the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins.

"What shall I do to be saved?" The Church which correctly answers this question contains and teaches essential truth. "By grace" says Paul "are ye saved through faith."[a] "A man is justified by faith, and not by the deeds of the law."[b]

The history of the Gentile church is marked

a Eph. ii. 8. b Rom. iii. 28.

by three bright eras: its commencement—its reformation—its renovation. There were intervals of dense darkness. Each era was formed by the discovery and proclamation of one leading Truth, *justification by faith.*

In these eras stand prominently forward three men. Each was formed by this truth; and each was met by it when precisely in the same state of mind as Mr. Bush at the time he entered a Methodist Chapel.

The first of these lived 1800 years ago, in Jerusalem. He was a man of strong mind and warm heart—largely conversant with the learning of the times—high in the favour of priests and rulers—living according to the strictest sect of his religion—glorying in his privileges as a Jew, and showing his zeal by persecuting the Church. Journeying to Damascus, with this intent, he was arrested by a voice from Heaven. That voice was the voice of Christ. Now commences a new period in his history. Alarmed, he asks, "What wouldst thou have me to do?"[a] He seeks and obtains pardon by faith in Christ.

[a] Acts ix. 6.

"What things were gain to me," he says, "these I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss..... that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, *but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*"[a] This doctrine he proclaims. In Palestine, through Asia Minor, in Greece, in Britain say some, at Rome itself he proclaims it. So great was his success that his enemies said he turned the world upside down. What was this doctrine? Let the two Epistles to the Romans and Galatians answer. Salvation in all its branches is obtained by penitent trust in the blood of Christ. Salvation by faith; this was the leading truth he taught, and that which combined other truths. This truth is the keystone of the arch, forming the entrance into the spiritual temple. Remove it, and the arch falls. We need not add that the name of this man was Paul the Apostle.

Ages rolled on and this doctrine became buried under the constantly accumulating rub-

[a] Phil. iii. 7—9.

bish of church forms. Three hundred years ago there was a similar man at the University of Erfurth, in Germany. In the Library of the University he finds a Latin Bible. To him it is a strange book. Different circumstances are used by God's Spirit to produce concern about his soul. Returning to Erfurth, from a visit to his parents, he is overtaken by a thunder storm. The winds howl, the lightnings flash, the thunder roars,—the bolt falls at his feet,—conscience is aroused,—and he there devotes himself to God. He enters a Monastery. He submits to the severest discipline, but finds no peace to his conscience. By reading the bible,—by conversing with the vicar-general, and with an aged monk,—he learns that a man is pardoned by faith in Christ. He seeks and obtains pardon. Soon comes another monk, commissioned by the pope preaching indulgences. He offers deliverance from purgatory by the purchase of an indulgence. Friends can deliver their departed relatives. "As soon", says he, "as the money tinkles in the bottom of the chest, the soul flies out of Purgatory." Was this in accordance with

the doctrine of salvation by faith contained in the bible? If pardon is full where is the need of the indulgence? If faith receive it direct from God, where is the need of absolution from the priest? GOD pardons. Pardon is obtained by FAITH. With these truths he opposes the preacher of indulgences, and by these truths the mighty fabric of Popery in every country in Europe is shaken. This man's name was Martin Luther. And hence arose the Reformation.

Two hundred years passed on and this truth was again almost forgotten. One hundred years ago we find a similar man at the University of Oxford. He lives according to the strictest sect of his religion, a Pharisee. He fasts twice in a week,—gives all his goods to feed the poor,—is at prayers every day,—at the Lord's table every Sunday,—visits the poor, the sick, and the prisoner; and at length goes to America a Missionary to the Indians. On his voyage he finds that he is without the faith which brings peace to his conscience, and gives power over sin. From the bible, from Luther's comment on the Galatians, and from conversation with

the Moravians, he learns that pardon is obtained by faith in Christ. Surprised he is to learn that the doctrine which made the Reformation, is almost lost sight of in a Reformed Church. He obtains this pardon for himself. What he obtains he proclaims to others. He preaches first in churches; when these are closed he preaches in streets, fields, houses, barns. From the Land's End to Newcastle-upon-Tyne; in various parts of Scotland, in Wales, in Ireland, he proclaims this truth. The nation is aroused. The name of this man was John Wesley. Hence arose Methodism. And similar efforts by holy men in the Establishment, and among Dissenters, renovated the Christianity of Britain.

In these three eras we see a sameness in the doctrine, a similarity in the men, a similarity in the effects. What was the state of mind in which each was when met by this truth? Convinced, but not converted,—alarmed, but not comforted,—anxious about salvation, but ignorant of the mode in which it must be obtained. In this state of mind was Mr. Bush when he first heard Methodist preaching.

And in the same state is every man who, stricken by the terrors of the Lord, is ignorant of the way of faith in Jesus Christ.

A clear statement of the doctrine of salvation by faith has distinguished Methodism from the beginning. By its teaching, the doctrine has been kept equally remote from opposite and fatal errors:—the *Formalism*, which would substitute external acts of any kind for this faith; and the *Antinomianism*, which would resolve faith into a notion, and separate it from holy conduct.

A man awakened to concern about salvation is brought to an interesting point in his history. From that point there are paths widely diverging. He either, to borrow Bunyan's phraseology, returns to the City of Destruction; or turns aside into the Town of Carnal Policy, and seeks comfort under the preaching of Mr. Legality, of the parish of Morality; or goes straight through the wicket Gate to the Cross, and thence to the Celestial City. By the one course he becomes again a careless sinner, by the second a formal Pharisee; by the other a sincere Christian, a pardoned and

regenerated man. How much depends on the path he takes! Luther the Reformer, and Loyola the founder of the Jesuits, were once in the same awakened state of soul. "Both," says D'Aubigné, the Historian of the Reformation, "were deeply sensible of the multitude of their sins. Both were seeking for reconciliation with God, and longed to have the assurance in their hearts. These two great men of the sixteenth century, these founders of two spiritual powers, which for three centuries have been warring together, were at this moment brothers; and perhaps, if they had met, Luther and Loyola would have embraced and mingled their tears and their prayers.

"But from this hour the two monks were destined to follow entirely different paths.

"Inigo, instead of feeling that his remorse was sent to drive him to the foot of the cross, pursuaded himself that these inward reproaches proceeded not from God, but from the devil; and he resolved never more to think of his sins, to erase them from his memory, and bury them in eternal oblivion. Luther turned towards

Christ; Loyola only fell back upon himself."[a] Mr. Bush, happily, came under sound instruction.

Methodism teaches that saving faith requires no prerequisite, but a contrite spirit. But it also teaches, that faith, while followed by pardon, is, at the same time, as invariably connected with newness of heart, and newness of life.

The unspeakable importance of a just apprehension of the way of a sinner's acceptance with God, is our apology for the digression in which we have indulged. We return to Mr. Bush. It was in 1806 or 7, most probably in the former year, that he united himself to the Methodist Church in Lamborne.

This was done, not without a struggle. With pride especially had he to contend. The Methodists in Lamborne were few, poor, and despised. He was now about twenty years of age, and heir to considerable property, of which he would shortly be the uncontrolled master. Different were his expedients to subdue pride. Once he followed a poor Methodist to the grave. At another time he held the

[a] D'Aubigne's Hist. of the Reformation, Book ix. Chap. 1.

preacher's horse in the open street—thus publickly, and by the performance of a menial office, avowing his connexion with a despised people.

Other difficulties remained. One was a strong attachment to a young person destitute of religion. To this he has referred as that which cost him the greatest struggle. The sacrifice was, however, made, and "from that time," said he, "the world was effectually crushed." On the subject of such engagements and marriages his views were very decided. He felt much if any engagements of this kind were formed by any of the junior members of his class. "Conceive of either party, in such an unsanctified union," says the Rev. J. A. James, "continually exposed, if not to the actual opposition, yet to the deadening influence of the other. Every Christian man carries in his own heart, and encounters from surrounding circumstances, sufficient resistance to a life of godliness, without selecting a still more potent foe to piety in an unconverted wife. When such a man unites himself with a female whose tastes and habits are opposed to spiritual religion: who is

fond of gay company and fashionable amusements; who feels restless, uneasy, and discontented in religious society and occupations; who has no love for family devotion—is it likely the husband of such a woman will long retain his fervour, his consistency, his spirituality? Will he not, for the sake of connubial happiness, concede one thing after another, till nearly all the strict forms of godliness are surrendered, and much of its spirit lost? His house becomes the scene of gaiety, his children grow up under maternal influence, his own piety evaporates, and at last he has little left of religion but the name." The influence on personal piety is even greater, when a woman, professing religion, is married to an unconverted man. Hence Mr. Bush thought it very important that young people should become decidedly pious before the formation of any engagement. If engaged to the ungodly, as they otherwise would be, the difficulty of decision becomes great, and if married, still greater: "a point," he says, "I have never heard sufficiently urged in sermons to the young."

In his own family, also, did Mr. Bush meet

with difficulty. His mother's brother who resided with them, and who managed their business, was strongly opposed to his union with the Methodists. Thinking he could disarm his uncle's prejudice better by writing than by speaking, he wrote to him. The letter was deemed so excellent that copies of it were read in meetings of the society at some distance from Lamborne.

At this period he showed himself a decided character. Referring to it he would say, "I was truly sincere." He gave his heart to God, and his hand to God's people, and never was either heart or hand withdrawn from the one or the other.

"He passed," says an intimate friend, "through great distress of soul before he found peace in Christ."

To his mother this was a season of blessing. She was a woman of strong sense, very economical, withal kindly disposed, but up to this period thoroughly worldly. Mr. Bush's spiritual concern was greatly helpful in leading her to religious decision. Seeing him fully

decided to devote himself to God, she formed a similar resolve. "If thou dost" said she, "I will too." She had previously wished to attend the Methodist Chapel, but wanted, she said, a leader. God provided her son to go before her. She was not, however, at once so fully decided as he was.

It had been their custom to have parties at Christmas. Cards were usually introduced, and the song went round. At the Christmas following, Thomas objected to their usual practice, and advised its discontinuance. His mother, however, wished to observe the custom once more. It was observed that year, but it is believed without the usual addition of the cards and the song; and from that time familiar and unnecessary intercourse with the world was abandoned. Both fully decided, they henceforth journeyed together in the way to Heaven. They felt it their duty to attend the week evening services. The uncle would often retire before their return home; and then alone, at the close of the day, and after the services of God's house, mother and son "took sweet counsel together."

At this period Lamborne still formed part of the Newbury circuit. The Preachers on the circuit in 1806, were the Revs. R. Smith, L. Andrews, and Thomas Twiddy; in 1807, Thomas Tattershall, W. Pearson, jun., and David Vipond. The Society in Lamborne had, previous to 1806, consisted of one class only. In this year Mrs. Pottinger was appointed to take charge of another. This holy woman at this time adorned and strengthened the little church. She was very helpful to Mr. Bush at the commencement of his religious course. An account of her, written by him, was inserted in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1818.

She was born in 1769, in the village of Aldbourn, Wilts. In early life she attended the ministry of the Rev. W. Mc'Neale, a pious evangelical Minister of the Establishment. Under his ministry she was often powerfully impressed. In the year 1788, when about nineteen years of age, she was, chiefly through reading, convinced more deeply of her guilt and depravity. "For about thirteen days, in the year 1790," she says, "I was so low and dejected,

the guilt of my broken vows stared me so dreadfully in the face, that my distress of mind was evident to the family, who feared that by so much reading and praying, I should lose the strength of my body, and the exercise of my reason: they advised me to be cheerful and to associate with the world. One day my bodily strength being nearly exhausted by reason of my broken spirit, I was walking in the garden, when on a sudden I saw with the eyes of my understanding the Heavens open, a person appeared above the brightness of the sun, and I heard a voice saying to me 'I am Jesus—I am the Lord thy righteousness.' These words were accompanied with mighty power. My understanding was illuminated, indeed, I felt a divine change in my soul, my heart was filled with love to God and every soul of man, both friends and enemies. I now began to reprove all that sinned in my hearing, both rich and poor, and the Lord was pleased to bless it: part of the family began to seek the Lord." We give her own words, and leave others to make their comment: overlooking

what was *circumstantial* we find what was *essential.* Here was trust in Christ exercised by a penitent soul, and followed by peace, and love, and joy. Here was the actual experience of what St. Paul describes, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."[a]

Circumstances requiring her to remove from her native village, she selected the ministry under which, she thought, she could best promote her spiritual profit. For some time she attended a Dissenting meeting, where the members of the church were high Calvinists. She admired their piety, but could not agree with all their opinions; because she had read in the bible, that Christ "tasted death for every man." She applied, however, for admission into the church. They refused, because she was, they

[a] Rom. v. 1, 2, 5.

said, a Wesleyan in principle: at this time she knew nothing of Mr. Wesley or the Methodists. The love burning in her soul was not to be repressed; hence she was in the habit of reproving sin and conversing about religion, and in this way she glorified God. On one occasion the minister said there was no need of talking with our fellow-creatures—our example was sufficient—God would draw his own elect to himself. She thought the priest's lips should keep knowledge; hence she for a time desisted. Conscience however began to reprove her, her own piety declined, and she found she must obey God rather than man.

In the year 1797, she returned to Aldbourn, and began to attend the worship of the Methodists. At first she did not quite agree with the doctrine preached; because it was asserted that Christians might love God perfectly, and might fall finally. However, fuller instruction led her to perceive that these were the words of truth and soberness. Of the blessing of perfect love she was a happy partaker, and consistent exemplar. "When tried,"

observes Mr. Bush, "sacred grief and compassion dwelt in her soul, instead of that inward rising of anger which former trials had occasioned."

Sometime after her acquaintance with Methodism, she married and settled at Lamborne, and immediately joined the church of God. Two or three extracts will describe her character and end.

"Nov. 6th, 1811. This day alone, busily employed, and in my usual frame of mind, that is, in prayer and praise, as I was saying 'Lord thou enablest me by thy grace to do all things to thee, thou sanctifiest my employment'—at once I felt surrounded by the Deity. I sunk into self abasement, I was filled with prostrate love, with joy unspeakable." What habitual spirituality does this express! What a sanctity given to ordinary and even menial work!

"A very striking feature in her character" remarks Mr. Bush, "was her zeal and concern for the prosperity of Zion. This, next to her own growth in grace, lay nearest her heart. For this she labored, fasted, and prayed incessantly. I am

witness to some of the many prayers, groans, and tears, she poured out to God, for the universal church; and still more for our own connexion, the Society, and her own class. To my knowledge she frequently set apart days of private fasting and prayer, for the prosperity of the church of God; and this was her usual custom, when any of the Society, more particularly her own class, had dishonoured their profession, or were backsliding in heart, or under the power of temptation." Such Christians are the real strength of a church. Holy and flourishing is the church that has many such!

Long and severely did she suffer from a cancer; but in extreme pain and weakness, religion was her happiness and strength. Writing from Oxford, she says, "changes of season or place make no change in my mind. No,

> "All's alike to me, so I
> In my Lord may live and die.'"

Shortly before her death she said with mingled reverence and confidence, that "to die would be like stepping out of one room into

another." Thus died this holy woman on Friday, Jan. 27th, 1815.

We have dwelt the longer on this case as giving a specimen of the piety with which Mr. Bush was brought into connexion, on his union with the church at Lamborne. And, no doubt, his own character took its impress from the piety of those around him.

CHAPTER II.

About the year 1809, Mr. Bush was appointed to the office of Class-Leader. A Wesleyan reader needs not be informed that a Class-Meeting is a meeting for prayer, and conversation on personal religious experience. The objects which a class meeting contemplates are expressly commanded. Christians are commanded "to edify one another," "to exhort one another," "confess their faults one to another, and pray one for another." In order to all this there must be intercourse, and intercourse about personal religion. A class meeting is a *mode* of doing a thing, in itself a duty, in the most efficient manner. What is left to accidental intercourse, will, if done, be done imperfectly; and in most cases be left undone. It is the office of the Leader to give counsel suited to the case of each, and to visit those who through sickness or other causes are absent from the usual meeting.

A class meeting has been absurdly likened to a popish confessional. On comparison, however, they will be seen to be very different. The one is private *confession* to a priest, the other is *conversation* among fellow christians. The one *exceedingly minute*, extending to every thought, word, and act,—the other such as a sound judgment will dictate. Perfectly distinct, too, are they in their *object*. The one is to obtain absolution from a man,—the other to obtain advice and consolation. *Pardon*, a man cannot give; *advice and comfort*, christians are well qualified to afford. And their united prayers secure a mutual blessing; for says Christ, "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them."[a]

About the time that Mr. Bush entered on the office of Class-Leader, he became a Local Preacher.

The scriptures recognize the principle that a class of men is to be set apart to the work of the Christian ministry. These are "separ-

[a] Matt. xviii. 19.

ated to the Gospel of God," and are called *presbuteroi*, presbyters, or elders; *episcopoi*, bishops, or overseers; *poimenes*, pastors, or shepherds. Their duties are defined. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,"[a] says Peter, to the *elders* or *pastors*. *To feed* the flock includes public preaching, private teaching, as well as the administration of the Sacraments. *To take the oversight*, implies care and guidance, or government; and includes the admission of members to the church, exclusion from the church, and the guidance, in conjunction with other church offices, of every branch of her operations.

The scriptures recognize another principle—that there is a class of men, auxiliary to the pastors or elders of the church. These are called *diaconoi*, deacons, ministers, servants, or helpers. The office was designed to be permanent, for the character required is minutely described: their work, however, is not clearly defined. Deacons were first appointed to take charge of the temporal affairs of the Church, for

a. 1 Peter v. 2.

the purpose of relieving the apostles:—"it is not meet," say they, "that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." It is not likely that their work was confined to these temporal matters. Christians are a "holy priesthood." Every christian is, in a certain sense, a spiritual officer. Every one is to say to "his neighbour and to his brother—know the Lord;" and this work is to be discontinued only when no more of it remains to be done—when "all shall know him from the least to the greatest." In the persecution against the church at Jerusalem, which arose on the stoning of Stephen, "they were all scattered abroad, except the apostles;" and "they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."[a] Those "scattered abroad," were the whole church. As every christian in those days, deemed himself to have a right to announce the word, a more responsible part of this work would be done by the Deacons.

Such an Auxiliary body, Methodism finds in her Class-Leaders, Local Preachers, and Stewards.

[a] Acts viii. 4.

The Class-Leader aids the Minister in private teaching; the Local Preacher in public preaching; the Stewards by taking charge of financial matters. A more numerous, or a more efficient Diaconal body, is possessed by no Christian community. In 1839, there were supposed to be in the world 16,085 Local Preachers. The Class-Leaders greatly exceed that number.

It is about the year 1809 or 10, that we find Mr. Bush a Class-Leader and a Local Preacher. The exact time when he became a Local Preacher the writer cannot ascertain. He held this office in 1812, and for some period before. The loss of speech compelled him to relinquish the office: that of Class-Leader he retained through life.

One of the first places at which he attempted to introduce Methodism was Childrey, the native village of his parents. This village is situated about three miles from Wantage. The population of the parish, in 1801, was 402; in 1841, 546. In the fourteenth century, a family, named Childrey, probably resided in the village or parish. Sir Henry de Childrey was Sheriff of Berks and Oxfordshire in 1336. In the

Church is a figure of a man in armour, said to represent Sir Edmund Childrey, who died in 1372.

In 1643, Dr. Pocock, the celebrated Orientalist, was presented to this living by his college. Mr. Bush has related to the writer the following anecdote concerning the Doctor. A gentleman passing through the village, stopped at the village Inn. Conversing with his Host, he enquired, among other things, about the character of the Rector. The Inn-keeper described him as a worthy man who preached some plain useful sermons, but "mind Sir," he adds, "he is no *Latinner*:" "The highest compliment," observed Mr. Bush, "which could have been paid him." That greatness which forgets *the great* in aiming at *the useful*, is truly great. His learning was employed to illumine by its light, not to dazzle by its glare. Strange to say, this great man, who was one of the first scholars in Europe, was on the point of being expelled from his living, by Cromwell's Committee of Triers, on the ground of "ignorance and incompetence." "Yet," says Baxter, who was opposed to them,

"to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers; that sort of men, who intended no more in the ministry, than to say a sermon, as readers say their common prayers, and to patch up a few good words together, to talk the people asleep on Sunday, and all the rest of the week go with them to the alehouse, and harden them in their sin."[a] Dr. Pocock died in 1691.

At the period of which we now speak a clergyman of a different character resided at Childrey, to whom we shall have ocasion to revert.

Some time in the year 1809 Mr. Bush visited Childrey, in company with Mr. Mitchell, well known in those days as a pious man, and a zealous, useful Preacher. Mr. Bush asked Mr. Bunce, a farmer, to allow the use of the yard fronting his barn. Mr. Bunce is a venerable man above 90 years of age, and now a member of the Methodist Society in Letcombe-Bassett, and related to Mr. Bush's family. From Wm. Kent, a

[a] Baxter's Works, vol. 1. p. 141.

baker, he requested the loan of a waggon as a substitute for a pulpit, at the same time inviting Mr. Kent to attend. Kent replied that if he became a Methodist he should offend all the farmers in the parish: moreover, he baked on Sundays, and gained more on that day than on any other day of the week. Notwithstanding he heard,—was soon deeply convinced of sin,—gave up his Sunday baking, and was one of the first members of the little church. Mr. Bush formed the Society: he read the rules, described the character required of each member, and explained the mode of supporting the ministry by weekly and quarterly contributions. Farmer Mitchell, who was with him, feared that the mention of money would quench their newly kindled zeal. His fears were groundless. Mr. Bush has often spoken of this Society as one of the most steady and consistent he has known.

Persecution soon arose. On one occasion, Mr. Bunce and Mr. Mitchell were summoned before the magistrates—the one for permitting, the other for conducting Divine Service in a place unlicensed. The charge was acknowledged.

They were dismissed with threats. Persecution, however, slumbered not. In September, 1810, an uninhabited house, belonging to Wm. Kent, forming part of the present Chapel, was licensed for worship. On Sunday, October 14th, John Bush, the constable, was sent by the Clergyman to demand the license. Wm. Kent desired him to inform the Clergyman that if he would call upon him the day following, he should then see the license. The Clergyman called, and the license was shown.

Another expedient was tried. The house was licensed,—perhaps the preacher licensed,—but were the people licensed to pray? Service was usually held on a Sunday afternoon, when a sermon was preached, and there was a public prayer meeting in the evening. On the evening of Sunday, October 21st, 1810, they were assembled for prayer as usual. Lawrance Belcher, Margaret Partridge the Clergyman's servant, and John Bush the constable, were present. They knelt not with the rest, but stood during the service. Several engaged in prayer: among others Wm. Kent and Wm. Franklyn. These

were both, on the evidence of Lawrance Belcher and Margaret Partridge, indicted for "praying or teaching," under a persecuting act of Charles II.

This act was made in 1670, by an unprincipled monarch, persecuting bishops, and a venial Parliament; to silence the best men, and best ministers in the kingdom, and in the world. Baxter thought that some of its enactments had special reference to himself. Two thousand of these excellent men had in August, 1662, to leave their livings in the Church of England, and expose themselves to poverty, scorn, and persecution, for conscience sake. Among these were Baxter, Howe, Manton, and many others—men who lived in troublous times—who in some things made mistakes,—but men of giant minds, of high and holy principle, whose writings contain the richest theology of any age since the Apostles, and whose works will be read, and their names revered, as long as the English language is known, and God has a church upon earth. The statute referred to, enacted that all who should "preach or

teach otherwise than according to the Liturgy of the Church of England" in any company exceeding five persons, should be fined twenty pounds, and that all who attended such a service should be fined five shillings. The statute had been modified by the Toleration Act, passed in the reign of William III. with reference to all licensed *to preach*,—but who thought it necessary to be licensed *to pray* in a prayer meeting? It was further modified in 1812.

This statute was now drawn forth from its well merited obscurity, to crush the infant church. On Tuesday, the 23rd October, information was laid before W. H. Price Esq. On Saturday the 27th, the case was heard, and William Kent and William Franklyn were fined in twenty pounds each, for *praying*. Kent refused to pay the fine. The act required that his goods should be seized.

The Preachers who visited Childrey, generally came from a considerable distance. A horse belonging to William Kent was frequently sent to meet the preacher, and was in consequence familiarly called "the Gospel horse." This horse

was taken. Kent could not bear to part with his horse. The horse was bought back for twenty-five pounds, out of which the fine and expences were deducted. Long after did the Gospel horse continue to perform his work.

William Kent appealed to the sessions, held at Reading, but without success. It was argued that praying was not preaching or teaching, as intended by the law. Still the Jury decided that praying was preaching or teaching, and for teaching, the law required him to be fined twenty pounds. A further appeal was made to the Court of King's Bench, where the proceedings were quashed, and the money was returned.

Thus ended an attempt on the part of a minister of religion to prevent a few simple people from praying. Does not all this evidence a temper very different from that of Christ? "Master," said John, "we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not us."[a] John's objection was a point of order. It was not the act done, but

[a] Mark ix. 38.

the mode of doing it to which he objected. But Jesus said "forbid him not, for he that is not against us is on our part." A Christian who sympathizes with Christ, will feel that no one who is for Christ can be against himself, even though his mode of advancing the interest of Christ may be different from his own. There is in such a case a oneness of object, though a difference in the mode of securing that object. There is then essential unity, with accidental diversity. So there was in the case of the man of whom John spake. And in every similar case the Christian heartily responds to the words of Christ, and says, "forbid him not."

The Clergyman was afterwards obliged to leave the place on account of debt. He left in debt for bread to the man whom he had persecuted. On one occasion his house was on fire. Some of Kent's family were forward in assisting to put it out. "I know," said he to Kent, "thou art a Christian, for thou doest good to thy enemies." A tablet in the church states that he died at Dieppe, in France, in 1840, aged 80 years. In

this trial Mr. Bush took a very lively interest, and spent both his time and his money, in bringing it to a just termination.

Methodism has often been like the bush of Moses, burning yet unconsumed. And for the same reason: the Lord was in the midst.

In the year 1810, the Newbury Circuit was divided. Hungerford was made the head of a Circuit, of which Lamborne formed a part.

Between the years 1811 and 1815, the writer can gather but little information respecting Mr. Bush. Enough is ascertained to show that he was diligently employed in doing good.

About this period he retired from business: for a want of attention to which, his uncle was accustomed to censure him. Mr. Bush, however, had motives whose force his uncle could not then appreciate. His health was never very good; and business was not needed. Besides, he wished to devote himself entirely to the work of God: he wished to imitate his Saviour, and to make it his one business to go about doing good: this was the chief motive, but one not to be appreciated by a worldly mind. The following

extract, found on a blank page of one of his books, will explain his motives: it is written in a contracted manner, by leaving out several letters in a word. In this manner he was accustomed to write his private memoranda relating to personal religion.

"When I gave up business, I gave up myself to be in spirit a Travelling Preacher; i. e. to be entirely devoted to God in body, soul, spirit, income, influence, and every other talent. O God, ordain me for special, spiritual service for thee in the church and in the world, for Christ's sake. Amen, and Amen."

From this time, more especially, he had but one work, and all he possessed was rejoicingly laid under contribution to promote its great objects. He entered fully into the meaning, and imbibed the spirit of the Apostle, when he said: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."[a] Entire devotedness to

[a] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Christ:—this was his ruling passion, and it regulated all his plans of action.

At this period he laboured as a Local Preacher. The places he visited were numerous, and remote from each other, including what is now the Hungerford Circuit, with parts of the Swindon and Wantage Circuits. Those who remember his preaching describe it as very practical and experimental. Without vehemence of address, he was earnest and impressive, and truth was applied very searchingly to the conscience.

About this time Divine Worship, by the Wesleyans, was introduced into Letcombe-Bassett. In this Mr. Bush assisted. This village is situated on a hill, about a mile from Letcombe-Regis, the place of his birth. It derives its name from a family, named Bassett, to whom the manor belonged in the 13th Century. The population, in 1801, numbered 230; in 1831, 288; in 1841, 293. The Methodists, we have seen, commenced preaching in Childrey about the year 1809. In the year 1810, Jonathan Legg removed from Childrey to Letcomb-Bassett, to manage a farm for Mr.

Bunce. He and a few others were accustomed to meet for prayer, in a stable, on Sunday mornings: in the afternoon of the day, they attended Divine Service in the cottage, occupied by the Methodists, at Childrey.

In the year 1812, an old Local Preacher preached in the open air, at Letcombe. The same year, in the time of harvest, Mr. Bush preached, standing in a gig, and expounded the Lord's Prayer. His clear exposition of that prayer, was, the week following, the subject of much conversation among the people. After this, service was held in a cottage. Sometime subsequently, the present Chapel was erected, principally at Mr. Bush's expence. This was the first Chapel he erected, and the commencement of a mode of usefulness to which he regarded himself as peculiarly called. His call, he observed, was "to collect a few sheep in the wilderness, and then to build a fold in which to shelter them." The church is still small, but it has held up a light in a dark place.

CHAPTER III.

We have seen with what purposes Mr. Bush retired from business. His desire was to employ his time, labour, and talents in preaching the Gospel, and his property in its support. It is said that he was urged to devote himself entirely to the Christian Ministry, but this his mother opposed. He certainly intended to do the work of an Evangelist. He was, however, not long after visited with an affliction which effectually defeated a part of his plan: we refer to the loss of his speech, which was, perhaps, the greatest affliction of his life. It was his thorn in the flesh. Oft did he beseech the Lord that it might be taken from him. The answer was "my grace is sufficient for thee," while for many years the affliction was allowed to remain.

The precise time when he was first visited with it is not known. It was certainly as early as the year 1815, probably as early as 1813, with some intervals of partial restoration, till 1833. Respecting the year 1815, the Rev. T. Webb, who was then on the circuit, writes: "At that time Mr. Bush was suffering from a bronchial affection, which deprived him of the power of articulation. He could speak only in a whisper, and that but little at a time. He usually carried with him a slate and pencil, and answered in writing."

The expounders of Divine Providence placed on this event different interpretations. Some said it was a judgment because his mother kept him back from the work of God. Others said it was that he might be kept at home, to do a great work in his own neighbourhood. Perhaps the design was with him as with Paul "lest he should be exalted above measure." Certain it is that his station, his benevolence, and his reputation for piety, made him at this time, to be, by many, almost idolized. Health and wealth, and talent and usefulness, would, unless

controlled by a large measure of grace, unduly exalt. Sometimes he has been heard to say—"If I had a body full of health, a pocket full of money, a mind full of wisdom, and a heart full of grace, how much good I could do." It has been answered, "All these are too much for one human being." It was well replied, "Grace would balance the rest." But would the grace be sought? would the entire dependance on God be felt? God saw proper to withdraw the health; but left the money, and wisdom, and grace.

His speech was partially restored at different times, and it is believed that he preached after his first attack; but he was obliged ultimately to desist. He continued, however, to meet his class, and what he wished to say to each member, was written on his slate, and read by one who assisted him. The remarks given in this way were often very striking and appropriate.

During the year 1815, he spent some time in London, at the house of a friend. He visited while there, the principal Sunday Schools. On his return he assisted to establish a Sunday

School in Lamborne; of which he was joint Superintendant, with his friend Mr. Davis, to the end of his life. The School has been a blessing to many.

After his return he addressed to his friend in London the following letter, dated April, 1815.

"My Dear Brother,—Tuesday was our quarterly meeting, and we did not return till yesterday evening. We had one of the most pleasant and profitable meetings I ever witnessed. Love and harmony presided among all present.

Mr. Tanner, my old friend, is ruined. His affairs are in a very bad state. He was worth, a month ago, nearly forty thousand pounds; he does not know but he shall lose all. It is a terribly severe affliction. His children came from school last week or the week before,—he had not seen them for several days, he thought it would almost break his heart. They are bankrupt, but it is expected that in the end there will be twenty shillings in the pound, or nearly. Tanner was awfully and shamefully deceived. The bank, when he entered his money, was nearly twenty thousand pounds minus, all which the other partners kept from him, and allured him with the profits. He no doubt acted very imprudently in rushing on without consulting his family, and examining things more to the bottom; but

he now pays dearly for it; for all must come out of his property, the others having none, and some, many thousands worse than none.

Mr. Tanner was a very generous, good man; yet he painfully laments that he did not do more for the cause of God, and says he sees Providence has a hand in depriving him of his property.

This morning I found the society, and my class in a comfortable state, and I hope some are growing in grace. This gives me great pleasure. I hope we shall yet see days of the Son of man in our circuit. Our preachers are humble, pious men; I feel my own soul quickened and revived, and I feel by the grace of God determined to live more fully to God's glory.

My health, I thankfully say, is through mercy considerably better. Under the divine blessing, my native air had the most happy effect in bracing me up again, and I continue quite comfortable in that respect.

I hope, my dear brother, your soul is prospering, but let me entreat you to use more closet devotion. The want of that is one great reason why your soul does not prosper as it ought. Do not trust in past experience, but endeavour to live near to God. This is the only way by which you can expect interpositions of Providence as well as grace in your favour.

My very kind respects to Mrs..... I again thank you both for your kindness. I hope you will answer the end of the institution of matrimony by being

mutual helps to each other's spiritual and temporal interest. Married people more especially stand in need of much grace, to enable them to fill the important situation, a gracious God has placed them in; and to enable them to instruct their children and servants by *precept and example*. Grace enables a prudent husband to rule with meekness of wisdom, and enables a prudent wife to obey with the same feeling. If grace decay, it is impossible for us to fill up any situation in life with those motives and tempers, which are so necessary to our own happiness, and those around us; and equally impossible to please God. The grace of God in the heart enables us to bear prosperity with humility, and adversity with fortitude. It enables us to live as we ought, and will enable us to die as we ought.

I am,

Yours affectionately,

THOMAS BUSH."

Mr. Tanner, mentioned in the letter, was an excellent man, and a liberal supporter of the cause of God. He married the widow of the Rev. W. Vipond, who died at Newbury, April 26th, 1809. His brother, the Rev. D. Vipond, died July 12th, 1812, at Mr. Tanner's house. They were both highly popular and useful

preachers. Mr. Tanner missed his provdential way, and was ruined.

For a few years we have but occasional traces of Mr. Bush, besides what is furnished by his correspondence. Deprived to a very great extent of the use of speech, he had, he remarks, but two instruments of usefulness; his property, and his ability to write. His correspondence at this period, is very edifying. It will serve to throw light on his character, and it is hoped afford spiritual profit. The following is to Mrs. Reynolds, an excellent member of the Society of Friends. Between Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Bush, there was much oneness of feeling.

"February 25th, 1817.

RESPECTED FRIEND,—I was favoured with yours, including the pamphlet, by Robins, for which I return you thanks. I do not feel prepared to write at length, but fearing I shall not be able to write on Saturday, the day Robins intends to visit Lamborne again, I drop a few lines to day. We are sorry to hear the account you give of your health, yet hope, through mercy, you will be again restored. It is certain the hairs of our head are all numbered,—consolatory thought,—and when we consider by whom, how strikingly

calculated to sink us into reverential gratitude. Let us then resolve,

'To praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.'

I am thankful to say I feel my spiritual strength rather more invigorated than when I wrote last. I have experienced many painful struggles lately, and have felt hard work to keep my head above water. Yesterday was a favoured day to my soul. While visiting a family in great distress, and beholding the tears rush from a father's eye, who had been a long time secretly struggling against what is termed adverse providences,—tears which his manly soul evidently struggled to conceal, but in vain, I felt my spirit within me moved. After giving him what little advice I could I left the house with emotions of a mingled nature, which had a blessed tendency to quicken my own soul:—surely it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. Mary continues sick. Brother Martin and sister Jones have considerable employment in their labour of love; and one poor girl, belonging to a very wicked, wretched family, appears to be under deep concern to escape the *Second Death*.

I am sorry to say our own temporal concerns continue to wear a very precarious aspect. After all I fear we must submit to a suit at law at the next assizes, which you may all conclude is painful to all our feelings, and much against our inclinations. Truly we may feelingly

subscribe to that Divine truth, 'This world is not our rest.' I am sometimes ready to think and inwardly exclaim, happy those who are safely escaped from the windy storms and tempests, to the mansions of purity and bliss; but it is at these times from temptation and not from a truly christian feeling. On calm, deliberate reflection, I feel, however, desirous to stay as long as infinite wisdom and goodness shall appoint, if by God's grace I am favoured to live to his glory. We shall always be glad to hear from Mr. R—— and yourself, as also to see either or both when convenient.

I remain, sincerely,

THOMAS BUSH."

The following, to his friend in London, contains some excellent remarks on the duties of a Class-Leader.

"March 8th, 1817.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—As you are now placed in a still more important situation in the church of Christ, of course your obligations to devote yourself fully and unreservedly to God, rest upon you, if possible, with tenfold weight.

I feel myself both unworthy and unable to give you advice relative to your new and important situation; yet, flattering myself that you will receive it with candour, as from a friend, I will venture through Divine assistance to drop a few hints.

I have long viewed the office of a Class-Leader as one of the greatest importance; and, I am fully persuaded, that the revival or decay of practical piety, depends much, under God, on the Class-Leaders in our Connexion. In every society, where the leaders are men of deep piety, and sound judgment in the things of God, the souls committed to their charge, will, through their instrumentality, be kept from resting in a form of godliness on the one hand, and from evil speaking, contentions, and divisions on the other. Let it then, in the first place, be your earnest desire and care, to keep the intercourse clear between God and your own soul.

In speaking of conviction of sin—the drawings of the Father—the witness of the Spirit—the inestimable privileges of those who are born of God, every Methodist Class-Leader ought to say with John,—"We speak that we do know, and testify that which we have (spiritually) seen." And it is exceedingly desirable, that a leader should be able to testify from his own experience, that "perfect love casteth out (all slavish) fear;" to say in the full sense of the word, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Those who experience perfect love, have clear views of themselves—the holy scriptures—the devices of Satan—the realities of the eternal world—and above all, of the infinite willingness and ability of Jesus Christ, to save to the utmost those who come unto God by him. Such

more feelingly yearn over their charge, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and are likely to be much more useful in leading penitents to the Lamb of God, and in building up believers in their most holy faith.

Always endeavour as far as in you lies, to give the trumpet *a certain sound*, to give to all *their* meat in due season. Endeavour to represent to all their proper state as clearly as you possibly can. We are in danger of letting penitents, or persons awakened more or less, rest with confused notions of getting holy, &c., without immediately directing them to the Lamb of God, and a free, full, and present salvation, through faith in his blood. The consequence of letting awakened characters rest in a confused state is, they either struggle on a long time in a dark, perplexed, and uncomfortable way,—not living to the glory of God, and overcoming the world and sin, as they would be able to do under the influence of living faith, and the witness of the spirit;—Or, on the other hand, they sink back again into spiritual insensibility, and in time of temptation fall away, or continue in a lifeless form with their hearts unregenerate.

And, before those who have believed with their hearts unto righteousness, endeavour to set the peculiar glory of the gospel dispensation,—press on their renewed hearts the privilege and necessity of having fellowship with the Father and his son Jesus Christ.

Those who live near to God, escape very many temptations, by which the unfaithful and lukewarm are frequently

attacked, and too often overcome. If believers are not encouraged to go on to perfection, they often sink little by little into the spirit of the world, which if not detected and strove against, will lead them to adopt its customs and fashions,—to associate with the men of the world, until little of their religion is left except a systematic creed in their head, and an outward attendance on the means of grace in their conduct. Oh! how important is the office you and I sustain in the church of Christ! How awfully responsible are we both to Christ and to his church! May we from this time be more faithful!

Be always punctual to your time of meeting,—go in a praying collected spirit. If any have been absent, never omit to enquire the cause. I know your business necessarily takes up most of your time; yet in your walks, if you go near the dwelling of any of your class who may have been absent, step in and affectionately enquire the cause. Some may say these are little things, but they are important; and the neglect of which is a neglect of our duty to Christ and his members,—sinks the reputation of a leader, and prevents his usefulness. But my paper fails.

I can only add, that the Challow Estate is at last sold, but it is uncertain when the purchase will be completed; so that I fear my intended journey to London, the latter end of April, will be impeded. I have had a great deal of trouble, but hope that now, at last, the business will be settled. Our School continues to flourish. We have 150 children, and 22 teachers; the attendance of the children

is very pleasing, and I hope and pray, that the instruction given them from time to time, will, through the Divine blessing, be made effectual to their conversion and salvation. Uncle has been seriously ill, but is considerably recovered.

I am,
yours sincerely,
THOMAS BUSH."

The following to the Rev. T. Webb, who had a short time before left the Hungerford Circuit, will be read with interest. It is dated March 18th, 1817.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I most sincerely wish I could give you a better account both of myself and the cause of God in this Circuit. Yet I am thankful to say my face is still Zion-ward. I feel strong desires to be *wholly and unreservedly* devoted to God—that all my tempers and conduct may be so regulated by divine grace, as to bring glory to God and to be an honour to his precious cause. I want a closer union with Jesus Christ by living faith. When the heavenly principle within is lively and vigorous, then our tempers are Christ-like—our conversation spiritual—and our conduct that of a disciple of Christ. When our venerable Father, the truly Rev. John Wesley, first sent preachers to Scotland, he was aware it would be but

little use to send any but those who were deeply devoted to God, and who preached a full, free, and present salvation—insisting much on experimental religion—and why? because Scotland was almost deluged with doctrinal light. I sometimes think England is, in a general way, in the same state deluged with doctrinal light, so that a preacher is not half so much likely to be useful now, as forty or fifty years ago, with the same grace and talents. Preachers in our day, will be of very little use, except they are deeply devoted to God, and in their preaching enter into the inward feeling of experience, and insist on a full and present salvation. I am astonished to see old professors return from sermons with as much unconcern as though the subject of the discourse were a Mathematical problem, only to be received into the understanding instead of being embraced with the will and affections, and digested and concocted into living food, for the soul to feed on, and grow thereby into the Divine likeness. Religion is *a reasonable thing*—infinitely reasonable; but it is at the same time SPIRITUAL, and should pass through the understanding into the heart, and from thence to practice, in all our intercourse with men and things, or it is but little worth. I am well aware my dear brother has often had thoughts similar to the above; and if they are properly weighed, will have a tendency to drive us from formality, and be a means of making us unreservedly devoted to God.

The Devil will fight for his kingdom, and when he stirs

up his faithful servants to persecute, we may expect the Lord is about to do some good amongst the people. We have had a singular and daring instance of persecution in our circuit. Wroughton Chapel is burnt down to the ground: pulpit, bible, and all. There is little or no doubt but it was wickedly and maliciously set on fire by the devil's agents. You know it underwent a repair not long ago—and what added seriously to the loss, it was not insured. I believe they preach on the ruins when the weather will permit. Now we are fired out, if I were our preachers, I certainly would go into the heart of the place, on the hill, and sound an alarm on that *unholy* mountain.

Brother ——— is dead, and is, I trust, landed safe. He passed through deep waters on his sick bed, on account of unfaithfulness and dealing with too slack a hand when in health. His moral conduct was unimpeachable, but he was like too many young people who are not wholly devoted to God. What a pity it is,—youth is the choicest time to bring glory to God, and honour to his cause; yet too many who are serious and steady are not zealous for God and the good of souls as they ought to be.

The following is to Mr. Reynolds, then in the Isle of Wight: it is dated Aug. 26th, 1817.

"I sincerely wish I could give a satisfactory account of

my own experience, but I still have to cry out, O my leanness, which is owing to my unfaithfulness. The fear of man is a great lion in my way, and I seldom leave company without cause of self reproach, and a train of misgivings of heart. Why is this ? I sometimes endeavour to excuse myself, from a very great constitutional reserve or unwillingness to give offence; and loss of speech is another nest for self to cover itself over with; but the plain naked reason is,—want of deeper piety, a closer union with Jesus Christ by faith, continually living as seeing him who is invisible, and living and walking in eternity. I feel the reading of the journal and experience of John Woolmer, under God, greatly blessed to my soul; and although it clearly discovers my own short comings and want of deeper piety, yet it is a means of kindling in me lively desires to be wholly devoted to God. Oh! how desirable it is to be holy in body, soul, and spirit; to employ our time and talents, according to our little measure, to the Divine glory. Nothing but feelings and pursuits like these, can give solid happiness, and deep inward tranquillity,—a state of heart beautifully expressed by Charles Wesley in the following lines,——

'A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
And Jesus reigns alone.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean;
Which neither life nor death can part
From him that dwells within.

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of Love divine,
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy Lord of thine.'

When we are favoured with the humbling and purifying influence of the Divine Spirit, so as to possess a state of heart, in some degree, in unison with the above lines; our spiritual senses are wide awake, and we live, if we may so speak, in a holy atmosphere. We see things in their true light, and are enabled to act in all things with reference to eternity. In such a world as sin has made the one in which we are passing our probationary state, so full of wickedness and dissipation, where almost every thing is perverted from the uses Infinite goodness intended and ordained,—how necessary is it for us who are favoured with God's revealed will, and for whom he gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins,—a manifestation of condescension and love, which can never be fathomed by finite minds, and which is contemplated by angels with the deepest adoration and astonishment,—how necessary is it that we should strive to walk worthy of such a high and holy calling, and above all things, to secure all the marks and features of the Divine character, by which the

great Shepherd will know his sheep at the last day.

What an astonishing difference there is between the eye of faith and that of sense! the eye of sense views riches, carnal pleasures, worldly honours, as essential to real happiness. Those are esteemed most happy who have the most wealth and sensual gratification; religion and religious characters are esteemed as mean and pitiable objects. But the eye of faith takes a wider view. It looks upon wealth and honour as no further desirable than as applied to the glory of God, and the happiness of man. In the situation of men of wealth, earthly grandeur and honours—if they are ungodly, if their power and influence are perverted to selfish and pernicious ends—the eye of faith is far from seeing anything amiable. It looks upon them with sacred grief and tender pity, knowing the slipperiness of their present path, and the awful and terrible end which will inevitably await them, if repentance prevent not. Asaph, in the hour of temptation, was led to envy the wicked who prospered in the world; whereas the righteous seed were in general under suffering and poverty; but when he went into the sanctuary, when he looked through the glass of faith, the temptation vanished: the former were then objects of his tenderest pity. There is generally much dissipation and specious appearance at public watering places; and although I know my much esteemed friends are redeemed from these evils, yet they will want the glass of faith in constant exercise. For as there is a sacred atmosphere

around a holy character, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; so there is an unholy atmosphere which surrounds the unholy.

I was at Portsmouth and the Island, nearly, if not quite ten weeks. I look back with gratitude to that time. I was much weaker then than I am now. I spent much time on the shore inhaling the breezes &c., and the rest, mostly in reading and in my room. Eternity then looked near, and at times exceedingly desirable."

The next, also addressed to Mr. Reynolds, and dated Jan. 25th, 1818, will describe the state of his body and soul.

"I just catch an opportunity to drop a few lines respecting my health. I feel thankful to say I feel better on the whole, though still weak and poorly, but it is all for the best; I feel I want much fatherly chastisement to keep me in my place, in any proper degree.

My greatest desire is to be more holy, to imbibe through the aid of Divine grace, more of the Christian temper, and to obtain a deeper baptism of the Holy Ghost. I feel myself very weak, have many short comings, and much want of spirituality of soul. The Lord has in a great measure laid me aside, but, blessed be his holy name, he has not cast me off. The Divine conduct is

very different from that of the vile Amalekite we read of; who, because his servant was sick and unable to serve him, left him to starve, or to be taken by his enemies. I still think I have two talents left; the one is my little temporal property, over and above my own convenience; the other is the privilege of communicating my thoughts in writing; and if the Lord will be pleased to bless me in this little sphere, I shall have the consolation that I do not live a useless life, which would greatly distress me.

I remain, sincerely,

THOMAS BUSH."

In April, 1818, he writes the same friend.

"No doubt you are surprised at not hearing from me sooner. I was in London when the last two letters arrived, and did not return till Saturday evening. The weather was very unsettled during almost the whole of my stay in town, which was three weeks; in the beginning of the last week I took a violent cold, attended with fever, which was painful at such a distance from home. Through mercy I am better to day, and hope as the season advances, under a kind Providence, to regain my strength. Mr. Winctone, whom I consulted, still thinks that if spared, I shall at a future period be favoured with the recovery of my speech. I know it is altogether dependant on the Divine pleasure; yet it gives me an increase of hope that

I may be again favoured with that invaluable blessing.

I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Clarke twice while in town; he was in London on a visit. He delivered two deeply impressive discourses, at least I felt their influence on my own mind,—the one at Queen-street Chapel, from Heb. x. 31-35. He dwelt on the sufferings and support of the primitive christians; he remarked that nothing but a Divine illumination and influence could have borne them through; that the same Divine influence was as essential to the christian church in our day, to enable us to depart from the customs, fashions, and spirit of an ungodly, yet deluding and fascinating world; and to keep our faith fixed on the unseen realities of eternity, so as to preserve our hearts and affections in heaven. He dwelt much on that part, "*Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance*;" he showed the nature of that heavenly knowledge communicated to the soul by the inward abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. He observed from the latter clause of the text, the awful possibility of falling from grace, and that this was generally by little and little. It began by imperceptible degrees. And said, he firmly believed that while life lasted man may obtain mercy and eternal life; and the holiest of the holy may draw back to perdition.

I remain, respectfully,

THOMAS BUSH."

In 1818, he addresses a pious female.

"DEAR MARY,—The enemy will suggest a thousand things to draw your mind from God. He will give you the prospect of health and long life, and present the deceitful deluding world before you, as having joys and pleasures which religion will destroy; or if that will not do he will represent the path to Zion as difficult and unpleasant, and many more temptations which I have neither time nor parts to point out. But it is all a lie—false as he who suggested it. How many are snatched away in the bloom of youth! Who can extract solid happiness from the pursuits and pleasures of sense? There may be a kind of peace and pleasure experienced by the ungodly while in health and godly prosperity; but let sickness and death come, and the scene is changed; his carnal peace and security leave him, and he dreads the thought of leaving the world, and entering into the presence of his God. The pious Psalmist in a moment of temptation was led to envy the prosperity of the wicked, who lived in ease and honour, while he was chastened by painful and long continued trials; but when he went into the sanctuary, then he understood their end, and they immediately became objects of his pity, and he abhorred himself for having given way to the temptation. (Ps. lxxiii.) And as to the difficulties in the way to Zion, thousands and millions who are now casting their crowns before the throne, experienced them in a much greater

degree than we are likely to do. It has often been a consoling thought to me, that many a shining saint in glory began his pilgrimage on earth with a good desire mixed with much weakness and opposition, and yet the grace of God enabled him to conquer, and the same grace is offered to me.

Be guided in every part of your conduct by proper motives and christian principles. It is this which sanctifies even the common actions of life, and converts them into an acceptable sacrifice through Jesus Christ. This is forcibly inculcated on servants in the holy scriptures. The apostle Paul, or rather, the Holy Ghost by Paul, says, "servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will, doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men," &c., (Ephes. xi. 5, 6, 7.) so that, as I said before, christianity influences and sanctifies the meanest and most insignificant actions when done from a sense of duty and with a pure intention to obey the will of God. It is the motives and principles of actions which constitute them good or bad; so that persons in the lowest stations or most humble employments, if they possess true religion, will pass through life happy in themselves, and a blessing to those around them. God will be glorified in the meek and quiet spirit, and in every part of their outward conduct,

however humble, when done with an eye to his glory as a part of service he requires of us.

I remain,

Your sincere friend and cousin,

THOMAS BUSH."

"October 9th, 1818.

DEAR MARY,—If I can, through the Divine blessing, be of any service to you in imparting suitable instruction, I shall be happy to do it; indeed that is one of the principal ways in which I can possibly be of any use under my present mysterious dispensation of Divine providence. The end of our existence in this world is to glorify God in our several stations and callings in life. We are called to do this both from the most solemn duty and from the strongest claims upon our gratitude. Unhappy will be the end of all, however harmless or innocent their outward conduct may be before men, who have not seen and felt their distance from God both by nature and practice; and have not felt true humiliation of soul so as to obtain mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ; and whose subsequent motives of conduct have not been influenced by an inward principle of spiritual life wrought by the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus.

As you feel the truth of this in some degree, and are desirous of becoming, in the true spiritual sense, a new creature in Christ, and to walk well pleasing in all things,

still keep a holy jealousy over yourself, and strive to live in a spirit of prayer; dwell in sacred meditation on those parts of the Holy Scriptures which declare the infinite love of God in giving his only begotten Son for our salvation, and the love of Christ in leaving the throne of glory and humbling himself to death, even the death of the cross, for us and for our salvation. How astonishing that such a stupendous mystery, such unparralleled condescension, should not affect us more, yea, humble us to the dust, and inspire us with holy confidence and love.

Continue to search the Scriptures; they are the revealed will of God, and by the tenor of which we shall finally be judged. Every part of the bible is full of instruction to a spiritual mind. When we take up the book of God we should open it with humility and reverence. Pray for the Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, and make you wise unto salvation. It is the Holy Spirit that enlighteneth the mind and applieth the word to the heart, that maketh it effectual. When we pray we speak to God, when we read his word God is speaking to us; in both cases we should be very careful in what frame of mind we perform these sacred duties.

January 11th, 1819, he writes Mr. Richard Reynolds.

"I am at present laid by with a violent cold, settled se-

verely on my loins, so that it is with difficulty I rise from my chair, or turn on my bed. On Saturday I was at work in the meadow, the wind was very high, and I continued a considerable time in a perspiration. I think I must have contracted it there. Yet one consolation is left, we are promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. Would to God (and I speak with reverence,) I answered the character better than I do; I should then take the consolation with less diffidence and more humility too.

I remain, sincerely,

THOMAS BUSH."

January 22nd, 1819, he writes to his friend in London.

"My Dear Brother,—I have often noticed that an anxious overreaching worldly spirit in professors of religion, is the ready way to bring them both to temporal and spiritual ruin. Thousands perish by the unlawful desire and use of lawful things. I have often thought of the parable of the Marriage feast, when the King's servants went out to bid them to the wedding. One had his farm—another had bought oxen—another had married a wife, and none would come. Now all this was lawful in its place—yet for these things out of place men lose their souls for ever. And the Devil has such specious reasons to offer professors

to get their souls dead, and buried in the world. He represents it under the names of prudence and duty, and of being able to do more good, and assist the cause of God; perhaps such an one has visionary prospects of great riches, and then he is to build Chapels, give liberally to Missions, and support the cause in a wonderful way, and cut a great figure in the professing world as well as in the profane. When at the same time, he is not doing that good with the little he has to spare, which he might and ought. And our Divine Redeemer, who is infinite in wisdom, says, "he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much,"—but who believes him? Only those who are taught of God, and who have learned of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart.

We are going on much as usual at Lamborne,—by far the most piety among the poor. We have lately opened, and are now fitting up a place at Wantage, to preach in. It is a dreadfully wicked spot; I hope the Lord will convert their poor wicked souls.

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS BUSH."

The following is to Mr. Reynolds.

"We sincerely hope this will find you with returning health, with the additional benefit of sanctified affliction. I often think of the remark of the pious author of the

Sixteenth Century, with reference to myself, where he says, 'he loses much who loses the intended benefit of affliction. It is a living consolation, to be assured that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice,' and additionally so to a true believer to be assured that all things work together for good to them that love God. Affliction is, perhaps, one of the most profitable schools; it makes our thoughts of home and our Father's house more serious and constant; and our desires are quickened and inflamed after those qualifications which will fit us for admission into the realms of eternal purity and blessedness. As for myself, I feel by long and well tried experience that I cannot, or at least do not, get on in any degree as I ought without the whip. It is by affliction I am feelingly conscious that this is not my rest; that my great business in this world is to aim at the glory of God, in reference to His will, and the relation it bears to the eternal state to which I am hastening. When I am favoured with a degree of health for any length of time together, I am betrayed, ungrateful as it is, into a volatile spirit, the things of the world are ready to appear in a pleasing view, and the spirit in which I live, as well as my conversation and general deportment, is often less spiritual, less under the influence of the Divine presence, and at some such times I feel neither fit to live nor die. But when I am brought low, and eternity appears just on the threshold, I feel ashamed to think how unfaithful I have been, how useless to what I might have

been; and although I feel at most times an evidence of general sincerity, and some degree of confidence and consolation; yet when eternity looks me in the face, I feel increasingly desirous that I may live all to and for God, for eternity, and the souls of men, and the interest of Christ's kingdom upon the earth. I am sensible, affliction is no virtue of itself, any further than accompanied and improved by Divine grace; yet it is peculiarly calculated to awaken the spiritual senses, and quicken the soul.

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS BUSH."

December 4th, 1819, he writes.

"DEAR MARY,—Read some portion of the Holy Scriptures every day, with prayer. Read in a spirit something like the following:—as you open the book, lift up your heart and say, O Lord give me to read Thy Holy Word in the spirit in which it was written; give me an understanding heart; teach me therein by Thy Holy Spirit and make me wise unto salvation: Thou knowest I desire to know and do Thy holy will, I desire to glorify Thee on earth and find my way to heaven: O! give me to know Thee more fully, whom to know is life eternal. If we read the word with reverence, humility, and child-like simplicity, we shall find it truly profitable; it will be attended with light and life both to

our understandings and wills, which is far better than all earthly teaching.

I hope the Lord is in some measure reviving his work at Lamborne; several have been awakened lately who are earnestly inquiring their way to Zion with their faces thitherward.

I am,

Your sincere friend and cousin,

THOMAS BUSH."

CHAPTER IV.

ONE of the most interesting natural objects in Berkshire, is the White Horse hill. It is interesting to the Antiquarian for its memorials of ancient times, and to the lover of rural scenery for its beautiful and extensive prospect. Thither also, in the pleasant days of summer, do many from the neighbouring villages resort, and enjoy the social pick-nick party. From one point on the top of the hill, is seen, far as the eye can reach, a wide extent of country, where the sight is impeded by no obstacle, and the scene is bounded only by the horizon; the whole forming a perfect circle. From this point is commanded a view of the county of Berks, with the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, and Oxfordshire. It is said that on a fine day, by the

aid of a good spy glass, one can see into Wales.

Near the hill are the villages of Uffington and Kingston-Lisle. Near Kingston-Lisle is the famous Blowing Stone. "The stone is a species of red sand stone. It is about three feet high, three feet six inches broad, and two feet thick; but it is rough, and of rather irregular surface. It has several holes in it of various sizes. There are seven holes in the front, three at the top, a large irregular broken hollow at the north end, (for it stands north and south,) and one if not more holes at the back. If a person blows in at any one of three of the holes, an extremely loud noise is produced, something between a note on a French horn, and the bellowing of a calf, and this can be heard, in a favourable state of the weather, at Faringdon Clump, a distance of about six miles; and a person standing at about a yard distant from either end of the stone, will distinctly feel the ground shake." It requires, however, one well practised in blowing, to produce this effect. The tradition is, that this stone was used to give an alarm on the approach of an enemy.

At the foot of the hill stretches the fertile and beautiful vale of Berks, including, probably, some of the most fertile land in England. Rich corn land, and equally rich pasture land—trees, farm houses, and villages—give beauty and variety to the prospect. The Wilts and Berks Canal, and the the Great Western Railway pass through this vale, and at different points intersect each other.

On the top of the hill is the site of an ancient camp, called Uffington Castle. It is "an oval earth work, seventy feet in diameter from east to west, and five hundred feet from north to south. It is surrounded by a double vallum or embankment, the inner one high, and commanding an extensive view in every direction; the outer one slighter. It is supposed that it was originally British, but afterwards used by the Romans." Near this, runs an ancient road called the Ridgeway, which passes through the county, and extends, most likely, into Wales.

On the side of the hill, cut in turf, is the well known White Horse. "It is a rude figure, about three hundred and seventy-four feet in length.

When the afternoon sun shines upon it, it may be seen at a considerable distance—ten, twelve, or even fifteen miles; and from its immense size, forms a remarkable object." There was an ancient custom of assembling annually to scour the horse—i. e. to clean away the turf where it had encroached upon it; but it has long been discontinued.

Its origin is disputed. Some say it was cut by Alfred, as a memorial of the battle between the West Saxons and the Danes, fought in 871, at a place called in the old Saxon Chronicle, Æscesdune. This took place before Alfred was king. Alfred engaged the enemy while King Ethered, his brother, was employed in hearing mass. But the locality of Æscesdune is disputed. Aston near Wallingford, Ashampstead in the same neighbourhood, and the range of hills near the White Horse, present their respective claims. Those who hold the last opinion, believe the White Horse to have been cut as a memorial of the victory. The Messrs. Lysons, in their Magna Brittannia, conjecture that it is of British origin, as similar figures are seen on

ancient British coins. It is not for the writer to attempt to decide this point, but the figure is certainly very ancient.

About a mile and a half distant from the white horse, stands Weyland Smith's cave. It is composed of large stones thrown on each other. The inhabitants "have a tradition of an invisible smith residing here, who would shoe a traveller's horse if it was left for a short time, with a piece of money by way of payment." Sir W. Scott has made use of the traditions of the neighbourhood in his Romance of Kenilworth. Weyland Smith appears there as a very prominent personage.

On White Horse Hill, some time about the year 1820, stood Mr. Bush. He saw the plain stretched before him—the prospect was pleasing, the land was fertile, but the inhabitants were spiritually destitute. Feelings passed over his soul like those of Christ, when he beheld Jerusalem and wept over it; or like those of Bishop Heber, when gazing on the beautiful Isle of Ceylon, and which the following lines so beautifully utter.

"What tho' the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's Isle,
Tho' every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile;
What tho' with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown,
The Heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone."

True, men bent not "to wood and stone;" but multitudes were living without God, without Christ, and without what Peter calls a "living hope" in the world. What matters it, whether a man is called Christian or Heathen, if he live without that saving interest in Christ, which a penitent trust alone can give? Here Mr. Bush sketched a plan of usefulness which was henceforth to engage all the energies of his life. Thus he records this transaction. "On White Horse hill I solemnly, and unalienably made an entire surrender of body, soul, substance, time, influence, and talent of every kind, to Thee as my Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and I took that whole district as my special vineyard." Did not angels look on this transaction with deeper interest than even on Alfred's victory? To the previous extract he adds—"*Recorded* 14th, May, 1826."

But the precise date of this covenant transaction, which he ever regarded as most solemnly binding, we know not. It was certainly before the date last named.

October 21st, 1825, he speaks of this as his chosen scene of usefulness. "Mark O my soul," he says, "thy peculiar province and call is to evangelize the great district in the Vale of the White Horse; not overlooking the other destitute parts of our country, and the true spiritual prosperity of our connexion at large."

April 24th, 1820, he writes to a friend:—"I feel Wantage and its neighbourhood laid on my mind, and have for some years; but the concern has so increased lately that I have taken measures and represented it to our last Quarterly Meeting to petition for a Missionary from the ensuing Conference. I have also exchanged a letter or two with Mr. Butterworth on the subject. I now leave the event to God and his people; if it sinks into oblivion I shall have an inward satisfaction of having followed my light. You know Wantage and its neighbourhood to be very wicked in a general way." Hence we have

ventured to place the date of this solemn covenant about the year 1820.

Do purposes such as these need apology? Some, we are aware, will regard such efforts as not only needless but intrusive. Two facts shall be his apology: multitudes were living without a saving interest in Christ, and passing to eternity, swift as the rapid but noiseless flight of time;—few and feeble were the means to call back to Christ these thoughtless ones. True, there was public teaching. But the teaching which was not decidedly evangelical he regarded as essentially defective, and fatally misleading. By evangelical teaching he meant that which first arouses the careless sinner to penitence, and then leads the penitent to exercise trust in the atonement of Christ, with the assurance that he will thus obtain pardon and purity. These views he found supported by the following scriptures.

The leading topics of the christian ministry. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greek, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."[a]

[a] Acts xx. 21.

The nature of faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."[a]

The effects of faith. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, all that believe are justified from all things."[b] "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."[c] "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."[d] "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."[e] Hence "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, given unto us."[f]

His object was to provide a ministry to announce these truths with clearness and power, and places for its exercise.

An extract will more clearly show his plan, and the entire devotedness with which it was pursued.

"I will lay out my yearly income faithfully for

a Ro. x. 10. b Acts xiii. 38, 39. c John i. 13, 14. d Gal. iv. 6. e Ro. viii. 16. f Ro. v. 5.

Thee;—if not in the same year, yet uprightly and faithfully. And if Thou sparest me to pursue the great work in the Vale of White Horse, I WILL PLANT THE GOSPEL, AND PURCHASE PREMISES, AND ERECT PREACHING HOUSES, AND SETTLE THEM ON THE CONFERENCE PLAN WITHOUT SELFISH RESERVES. I will not lend my *yearly income* on interest, but will honestly lay it up for the cause of God. O make me as a child of eternity while in time. O, in Sovereign mercy, give me to go through the world under the influence of special power from Thee. May I be raised above the influence of all sensual desires and pursuits. O give me to feel that I am ordained, called, qualified, and redeemed by Thee, for special service both in the church and in the world. O give me to live in this holy atmosphere at all times, and in all places and companies, in all humility of mind, and gracious, soul humbling, soul transforming feelings, for Jesus Christ's sake, for Thy name's sake, and for Thy own glory. O restore my voice again,—Lord heal me I beseech thee, for these great and holy ends! O let nothing incapacitate me for Thy service!

☞ My Chapels shall be settled so that the surplus income go to support the regular ministry in the circuit."

We have seen that in the year 1820, he thought much of Wantage. WANTAGE is an ancient town. At the period of the Saxon

Heptarchy it was a part of the Kingdom of Wessex, and was included in the royal demesne. Here was a palace of the Kings, and here, in the year 849, was born Alfred the Great. The name of the place was at that time *Vanathing*. It is sixty-three miles from the General Post Office, London, by the coach road. The population of the town, according to the census taken in 1841, is 2846,—that of the parish, including the neighbouring hamlets of Charlton and Grove, about 3600. About thirty years ago many of the inhabitants were employed in tanning leather, and in the manufacture of sacking, collar cloth, twine, &c. The place was at that time proverbial for Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, and the kindred vices. Its moral character is greatly improved, and is still improving.

It was not till the year 1818 or 19, that the Methodists established stated religious services in this town. A room, which had been a carpenter's shop, was procured and fitted up for Divine worship. In 1820, the Conference was requested to station a minister at Wantage.

Mr. Bush made himself responsible for the support of an unmarried man for four years, with the promise that at the end of that period, provision should be made for a married minister. The Rev. J. Willis, who had been a missionary in the West Indies, was accordingly sent. His labours were successful, and a small Society was soon collected. The first Methodist Society in Wantage, was formed Sept. 28th, 1820. Preaching had been previously introduced into the neighbouring villages of Childrey and Letcombe-Bassett: these with Wantage, formed the nucleus of a Methodist circuit. The room in which the services were held, was soon found too small. Often was it filled almost to suffocation. About April, 1821, premises were purchased for the erection of a chapel. The chapel was completed and opened in Oct. 1822. The Rev. J. Gaulter, and the Rev. J. Willis who had then left the circuit, preached the opening sermons. At that time seven villages around Wantage had been visited by the preachers. A Tract Society had been formed embracing all these villages. Adjoining

the chapel there was a house for the minister. The money for the erection of the house and chapel was supplied by Mr. Bush, with the exception of what was raised at the opening services. He thought proper to leave as a debt about six hundred pounds. The rent of the house and the pew rents, were received in lieu of interest. What was thus received, was employed to promote the work of God in the circuit, and it was so arranged that in case of his death, the house and chapel should be left free of debt. Mr. Willis was succeeded by Mr. Wilkinson, and Mr. Wilkinson by Mr. Cocking. Mr. Tabraham was appointed in 1825. He was the first married minister, and a grant towards his support was allowed from the contingent fund. Mr Bush's regular subscription was twenty pounds annually, and this was continued for many years. The apostolic labours of Mr. Tabraham are spoken of by those now living, who were members at that time. With great perseverance, he extended his labours into the neighbouring villages, where he was often assaulted by brutal mobs; but the work of the Lord prospered.

Shortly after the opening of the chapel at Wantage, Mr. Bush became more intimately connected with the Swindon circuit. SWINDON stands in a pleasant and healthful situation on the top of a hill. In 1831 the population numbered 1742. The station of the Great Western Railway near the town, and the extensive workshops of the Company giving employment to a large number of men, have now raised the place to considerable importance. A new town near the station has rapidly grown up,—the old town has been considerably enlarged and improved.

Methodism was introduced into the neighbouring village of Hodson earlier than at Swindon. About the year 1810 Mr. Wheeler, father of the Rev. James Wheeler, resided in that village. The Methodist preachers at that time visited Wanborough. He heard of a man at Wanborough who professed to know his sins forgiven. The knowledge of sins forgiven was then deemed a thing most marvelous, and much did he wish to see that man. He heard the preachers at Wanborough, invited them to visit

Hodson, and sought and obtained forgiveness for himself. He had lived a moral life, had regularly attended the Parish Church, and some wondered much that he changed his religion. He himself felt that he had been living without religion, and that, therefore, he had previously none to change. Mr. Bush in those days, occasionally visited Hodson as a Local Preacher. A few from Swindon usually went thither to worship on the sabbath.

Mr. Pocock from Bristol, was the first Methodist preacher who preached at Swindon. He usually travelled in the summer season, through different parts of Wilts and Berks, preaching in a Tent. James Hiscock, the town cryer, was employed to inform the inhabitants of the preaching. He was a member of the first class formed, and after remaining for many years a consistent member of the Methodist Society, died in peace in 1845. Mr. Pocock subsequently left the Methodist connexion, and formed a party called the Tent Methodists. The scripture passage on the first ticket issued was singularly prophetic. Underneath a tent

outspread is this passage: "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."[a] What was of man, the forming a distinct party, did come to nought: what was of God, remains. Some brought to God by the means thus employed, have arived safe in heaven, others are on their way thither. Mr. Pocock in after life, rejoined the Methodist Society.

Divine service at Swindon was first held in the house of Mr. Node. The chapel was built about 1813. In 1814 a preacher was first stationed there. In 1824 the financial affairs of the chapel were greatly embarrassed, and its sale was seriously contemplated. Mr. Bush paid the debt, but the chapel was at the same time regularly settled on Trustees, and the pew rents he took in place of interest. He afterwards built two houses on the chapel property, one of which is occupied by the minister.

The entire property he has left to promote the work of God in the circuit, subject only to

[a] Acts v. 38, 39.

the debt of two hundred and fifty pounds, to be paid his Executor. This debt was left in consequence of the outlay in the building of two houses. To the time of his death he was a regular subscriber to the funds of the circuit.

A few extracts will give a view of *himself*. Dec. 3rd, 1820, he writes to a friend.

"It is extremely difficult to be much with worldly people, and not suffer loss to our own souls. The very spirit of worldly company is infectious. And when we are among such as treat us kindly, and are desirous of pleasing, it is extremely fascinating and dangerous. A Christian much sooner partakes of the worldly spirit, than worldly men partake of the Christian's. And why? because there is so much tinder, if I may so speak, in our hearts, till wholly renewed, to take fire when Satan and his agents strike with the flint and steel of temptation,"

The following are selected from his very irregular entries.

"Feb. 7th, 1825. O! my God I have most solemnly given myself up to Thee! I have particularly covenanted and engaged to take *the whole District of the Vale of the White Horse* as my Vineyard, as far as my yearly income will allow,

with proper quotas to Thy general cause, and poor relations. O look upon the still desert parts of my native land. How many counties are still comparatively destitute of Methodism, and the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, by any truly evangelical ministration. I know foreign missions are of inconceivable importance; the most noble subject that can engage the mind of man; and while Christians are alive to God, they can never view with indifference the state of the heathen world. Blessed be God the missionary flame is revived, and is, I trust, increasing. A Christian Public is alive and active in that department. As to myself, I am a poor solitary, afflicted, insignificant individual; and have, for some years, been led to try to do a little good in those ways and directions where I believe, humanly speaking, it would not otherwise have been done at all. I will be entirely and unreservedly devoted to God. O that I may as fully as my nature is capable. If the Lord should continue or increase my Providential talents, I will use them fully for him. I will have a particular eye not only on one District, but to the neglected parts of this Country in general, if I can possibly by my yearly income, my little influence, or by writing, advance the glory of God in that way. O! my God, if Thou canst so greatly bow, heal me, restore my voice and strength, so far as shall enable me to glorify Thee. O! ordain me for special service for Thee! Ever favour me with justness of thought, humility of soul, spirituality of mind, that will enable me to glorify Thyself, for Christ's sake."

"June 6. I have been considering why I have been praying so often and so fervently to be spared, and to be saved from those diseases and deaths which the Lord permits to befall the righteous. Why do I ask for *special mercies*? I should not, my God, dare to ask them of Thee, did I not sincerely desire and design to make *special returns*. Not by way of merit or commutation,—God forbid the thought —for I am the vilest of the vile,—but I do most fervently desire to glorify Thy holy name, and to be an instrument in promoting Thy spiritual kingdom. Thou knowest, O my God! it was from a sense of duty, and with a single eye to Thy glory, that I began, and desire to be still instrumental in carrying on, in all humility of mind, and unostentatious silent pursuit, that great work at Wantage and Swindon, and their extensive neighbourhoods. O Lord Christ! I beseech Thee, let it not sink and come to nought. O! carry it on. O! in sovereign mercy, overcome all opposition, and let Thy mercy triumph in these places. And I do request, and specially and fervently beg, if Thou canst make it consistent with Thy own glory, and my holiness and final salvation, that Thou wilt restore me so far, and spare me, to use me more fully as an instrument in promoting Thy spiritual kingdom on earth. I record this, O! my soul, that the Lord will condescend to show me special mercy and favour, and answer my unworthy, yet fervent petitions, in his Son's name; for Thou O Christ! hast said, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified

in the Son, if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' I acknowledge my most solemn obligation, by covenant vows and promises, to be entirely devoted to God, and the promotion of his great cause on the earth, in every possible way,—in body, soul, spirit, substance, time, influence, and every talent."

"May 18, 1826. I am fully convinced that attempting to converse, and many times without real necessity, brings me low. My complaint, I think, was brought on by straining my voice, and a relapse by over exertion in speaking. I know it will be a painful self-denial; but, as the Lord does not use extraordinary means where ordinary ones will avail, I will from this day refrain from speaking or even whispering, in all cases where I can use my slate, and in other cases I will only whisper just as much as is really necessary. And I will impose this silence on myself till next Old Lady-day, the 6th April, even should my chest begin to receive its tone. The temptations to converse, at least to try at it, are so numerable, that unless I make a solemn resolution not to make the attempt, they will prevail; I am convinced that my life and future usefulness, in a great degree, depends, under God, on my observing this resolution. Triune God, hear and answer prayer."

"Oct. 4th, 1827. As I have solemnly given myself to

God in the covenant of redemption, body, soul, substance, influence, time, and every other talent, under every possible contingency and devoted my yearly income to his cause, and engaged, if spared, to purchase premises, and erect chapels and preaching houses, &c.; that my corrupt and deceitful heart may not retract or equivocate, I will lay down a plan steadfastly to act by. What money I advance to such things out of my yearly income, the interest or profits thereof, shall in a general way go to support the cause of God, in the circuit where such places may be so built and purchased. And if on deliberate conviction it is not expedient, I will so advance it as not for any heirs or executors to have any claim upon it. I will settle all chapels on the conference plan without selfish reserves, on account of part of my yearly income being advanced in them. And I will keep clear accounts specifying all proper distinctions. O Lord, Thou knowest the treachery of my heart, and how deceitful it is. I beg that Thou wilt strengthen me, and O in sovereign mercy, help me to glorify Thee."

"June 8th, 1828. Engaged in reading the Life of Henry Martin, that blessed missionary. He observes while on his voyage to India, "We are just to the south of all Europe. I bid adieu to it for ever, without a wish of ever revisiting it, and still less with any desire of taking up my rest in the strange land to which I am going. Oh no! Farewell perishing world. For me to live shall be Christ. I have

nothing to do here but to labour as a stranger, and by secret prayer and outward devotion, do as much as possible for the church of Christ and my own soul, till my eyes close in death and my soul wing its way to a better world." Henry Martin adds, "I am born for God only."

"Dec. 29th. I am by many solemn covenants entirely, unreservedly, and unalienably devoted to God. I sensibly feel unnecessary converse with the world to weaken me as a Christian, and it does not glorify God in any way, and is peculiarly hurtful to me, in body as well as soul. I will, therefore, in all my journeyings through the wilderness, be careful with whom I associate. I will not enter on what are called social visits. I will be entirely given up to the great work of God as alone on earth. I do not condemn it in others, properly conducted; but I know I should get hurt thereby, both in body and soul. Mark this, O my soul!"

In January, 1829, his uncle who lived in the house, died. As it was before stated he opposed Mr. Bush at the commencement of his religious course. When cooking on Sundays was given up, he was much offended, and for some time would not, on that day, dine at home. Afterwards his opposition subsided, and he would occasion-

ally attend the chapel. His life was blameless, his temper mild. On one occasion Mrs. Bush, the servant, and himself were conversing about religion, when suddenly and earnestly he said to the servant, "Well, Mary, what must I do to be saved?" still he lived without the assurance of pardon, and without religious enjoyment. In a letter to a relative, dated January 26th, 1826, Mr. Bush speaks of his death.

"I drop a line to inform you of what you have possibly heard from some quarter or other, that poor Uncle went the way of all flesh, on Tuesday last, about six o'clock in the evening. I feel very thankful to say that the extreme drowsiness left him about three days before his death, and he became truly concerned about salvation. Of course I was often with him, and endeavoured to direct his mind to penitential feeling, and to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. He was very simple and teachable, and through very great infirmity, possessed his soul in unbroken patience.

On Tuesday, after tea, I saw nature rapidly sinking. I left him, and went down to pour out my soul to God, and recommend his departing spirit to redeeming grace and love. I involuntarily exclaimed in the fulness of my heart 'Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the help of the helpless,

the hope of the hopeless, the Saviour of the lost. Save him in the eleventh hour.' In a moment such a burst of thanksgiving came over my spirit, that petition was swallowed up in praise. I exclaimed. 'he is gone.' The words were but just out of my mouth, when C. Salt came to the stair head, and said he was departed. He left, I am sensible, no clear evidence of his acceptance, but he prayed almost incessantly in the fulness of his heart, for the last two days. And I indulge a hope, that if his soul had been plunged into the bottomless abyss of misery, I should not have been favoured with such a spirit of gratitude; for I could not have given it myself. I know relatives are ready to catch at every probability of evidence of the salvation of their departed friends. After all, it is madness to defer it to a bed of sickness, or old age, or death. He expressed great thankfulness to me the day before he died, that he should die at our house, among those who cared for his soul!'

In the year 1830, Mr. Bush built a small chapel at West Hendred, which cost something more than one hundred pounds. In 1831 he purchased the chapel at Childrey, for two hundred pounds. Two cottages had been converted into a chapel by Wm. Kent, and used as such

for many years; still it was Mr. Kent's private property. Mr. Bush, desirous to secure it for the benefit of the connexion, purchased it, and settled it on Trustees.

On Saturday, March 12th, 1831, he writes.

"My chest and voice are again weak and diseased through the exertion I underwent, as a Member of the Committee for rewards connected with the late unpleasant and disgraceful riots. I got nothing, by the most disinterested labours, in seeking out and sitting on the cases of those who stood loyal and went against the mobs, but a diseased chest and personal sacrifice, together with abuse from those to whom I could not conscientiously vote rewards. I hear to day, that one man, and probably his family, have ceased to attend chapel on that account,—a man who, on his own evidence, deserved nothing. However, I will never, in future life, if spared, engage in civil or litigating affairs, without a clear conviction of the utmost necessity of the case. My call is to be a wayfaring man for the Gospel's sake, and to have nothing to do in the world, but in the word and work of God."

About this time there were serious riots among the farmers' labourers. The November preceding, an attempt was made to set fire to

Lamborne in two places. Another part of the town was intended to have been fired, but the heart of the man who was engaged to do it failed. The man who actually set fire to the two places was hanged, his accomplice became King's evidence and was pardoned; but he, and others suspected, left the country. The riots followed. Mr. Bush rode among the rioters, and expostulated with them. He appealed to their knowledge that he had ever been a friend to the poor. His appeal was admitted, and he himself was treated with respect.

On Sunday, March 3rd, 1833, he says.

"Having been restored from a dangerous malady, occasioned by scalding my left leg, followed by two large carbuncular boils, which confined me from the means of grace for two months, I do now solemnly renew all my covenants and engagements with my God. And there are three things I wish most solemnly, conscientiously, and faithfully to keep in mind, and act upon in my future life.

First. I will care for the cause of God in general.

Secondly. Wantage and Swindon in particular, and those neglected districts.

Thirdly. I will visit the poor of Lamborne indiscrimi-

nately, and talk with them on spiritual things every year. So help me God."

His purpose was to see all the poor in the town once in every year.

On his Birth day, Oct. 11th, 1833, he says.

"I will by the grace of God, use more self-denial in my speech, and save it especially for leading my classes, and promoting the great work of God at Wantage and Swindon, and in those extensive districts, and in visiting the poor."

In 1835, there was a great revival of religion at Lamborne. The labours of the Rev W. Pollard, and the Rev. I. Phenix, were greatly blessed through the circuit. The chapel at Lamborne was rebuilt, with a School Room and Vestries attached. While the Chapel was rebuilding, Mr. Davis's barn was used for public worship. Souls were saved, and times of refreshing were experienced in the barn. Mr. Bush was principally instrumental in the erection of the Chapel and School Room. A debt of four hundred and eighty pounds, due to him on the Chapel, he has cancelled by his will.

On January 30th, 1837, died his mother, aged eighty-one. She was a woman of strong sense, great simplicity of manner, and of sincere and deep piety. Exceedingly economical, she sometimes thought that his liberality went too far, but was herself very benevolent to the poor. For his private uses he had an annual amount. His benovolence, however, would generally exhaust it before the time, and he had to apply to his mother for more, when the old lady would say, "Why Thomas, what hast thou done with the money?" For some time before her death, she ceased to impose any restraint on his benevolent disposition. Between them there existed a strong attachment, not only because related in the flesh, but in the Lord. She met with her son in class. On her account he continued unmarried, having resolved never to marry during her life. Her memory was cherished by him with filial reverence. "My mother," he has been heard to say, "is in heaven; but I would not now do any thing which would have grieved my mother." One grave contains them: "Thomas," she said, "we were brought to God

together and we will be buried together." They are buried at Lamborne, while the remains of the other members of the family lie at Childrey. On the day of her death he writes.

"O my God, I am this day an Orphan, deprived of my dear surviving parent. I bless Thee, from the ground of my heart, for sparing her to me so long. I will now, by Thy grace, be, in the fullest sense, entirely devoted to Thee. I solemnly renew all my foregoing covenants and bind the whole upon me. I will be Thine in body, soul, spirit, substance, time, influence, and every talent—all I am, have, or ever shall have or be. I do solemnly take Thy cause and the poor as my inheritance and family. I will from this time be fully a servant of the church, and lay myself out in promoting Thy spiritual kingdom upon earth, particularly Wantage, Swindon, and those neglected districts."

About this time he enlarged the sphere of his benevolent operations: Methodism was introduced into Faringdon. FARINGDON is an ancient town, and a considerable portion is "pleasantly situated on an eminence. It is sixty-nine and a half miles west by north from London. The Saxon kings had a palace at

Faringdon, wherein Edward the elder died in 925." The population of the whole parish, in 1841, was 3593. Methodism in this town commenced as it does not usually commence. It usually begins by preaching in the open air, rises to a cottage, and thence to a chapel. In this case a chapel was built before a Methodist sermon had been preached. The chapel was built in 1837, and opened in Jan. 1838, by Dr. Bunting, who thus introduced Methodism into the town. In this work, Mr. Bush was aided by his friend and relative, Wm. Shippery, Esq.

They pledged themselves, on condition of receiving a small grant from the Contingent Fund, to become responsible for the support of a young man. In 1836, the Rev. J. Payne was appointed to open new places in connexion with the Wantage and Swindon circuits, and resided at Wantage. The Rev. Joseph Roberts succeeded him, and from the time of the opening of the chapel, resided at Faringdon, which was attached to the Swindon circuit.

A few who had been members of Methodist Societies in other places, were living in the

town, and united themselves in church fellowship.

In building the chapel he and his friend acted on their usual plan. The chapel was regularly settled on Trustees for the use of the connexion, the pew rents were taken as interest for money laid out, no claim could be made on the Trustees after their death, and what was thus received was more than given back to promote the work of God in the circuit.

The year 1839 was the Centenary year of Methodism. To the Centenary Fund he gave one hundred guineas, and was Treasurer for the circuit.

At this time he directed considerable attention to the Tractarian controversy. This movement commenced at Oxford, in 1835, with a view to sustain the Established Church by a revival of "church principles." A young man studying at the University, a member of a highly respectable family in the neighbourhood, visited Mr. Bush to convert him to these "principles." "While arguing," said Mr. Bush, "we are on a level, otherwise there is no fair argument: afterwards you resume your

station in Society, and I resume mine."

The argument was first carried on in conversation; afterwards his opponent proposed that it should be conducted in writing. Mr. Bush wrote in consequence the following letter, which was never answered. This letter and another following embraced the chief points of the controversy.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have read Bishop Tomline on the thirty-nine Articles, and am sorry to say have taken undue liberties with it, by occasionally writing in the margin with a pencil, and dashing; and occasionally putting a finger, where the Bishop's exposition flatly opposes your exclusive system.

I have also read Mr. ———'s pamphlets, which are principally *intended* to establish the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration." I have given the subject all the attention of which I am capable. I have endeavoured to compare them with the Holy Scriptures, and with the true analogy of faith, experience, and practice, contained therein; and the result is, a firmer and more penetrating and satisfactory conviction of the scriptural nature and authority of my own principles.

To begin with what is termed "the APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION" by a lineal descent. In the first place, the authors take for granted what they are bound, in all

fairness, to prove; and even if proved by historic evidence, would be far, very far, from being a *scriptural* line of things. Timothy was to lay hands on 'faithful men, who should be able to teach others also,'—this constitutes an essential part of the injunction. The doctrine of *Apostolical Succession* was the heavy artillery which the Popish Doctors levelled against our venerable Reformers; and which they repelled by denying its proof. Bishop Stillingfleet expressly asserts, that there is no form of Church government laid down in the New Testament, which is exclusively of *Divine right*. He acknowledges that there have not been wanting plenty of *Spiritual Tinkers*, who have taken upon them to mend the *gaps* in the successional hedge; but their work, when compared with genuine ecclesiastical history, falls to pieces. Bishop Jewell, (a great authority with the Church of England) says, "the grace of God is promised to pious souls, and to those that fear God, and not affixed to Chairs and Successions." It cannot stand fairly with the Sixth Article of religion, which says, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought necessary or requisite to salvation." Now to attempt to prove the Apostolical Succession by lineal descent, men must leave 'Holy Scripture,' and go back to 'tradition,' and 'endless genealogies;' which can only by possibility 'minister strife' in

the Church of God, and not 'godly edifying.' Bishop Tomline himself admits, that even after the revival of literature in the English Church, there were eight thousand Parishes, out of about ten thousand, which had *ministers incapable of preaching;* and, therefore, the homilies were compiled, and required to be read, as a substitute. And yet, these according to your system, were the only successors of the Apostles, authorized by Christ to teach His heavenly religion. Was this 'laying hands on faithful men who should be able to teach others also?' Oh! shame!!! Oh! the arrogance of spiritual despots, who endeavour to establish such unscriptural assumptions. It is true, that some of the Apostles themselves, in the early stages of their discipleship, at the time when our Lord told them he had 'many things to say unto them, but they could not hear them now,' appear to have been tinctured with this unloving and exclusive spirit,—'Master,' say they, 'we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not us,"—he is out of the successional line,—'Jesus saith unto them, forbid him not.' Oh! how unlike the Master are some of the professed disciples of the present day.

In order to take a right view of the subject, we must come to this:—What is religion? What is the kingdom of God? Is it ESSENTIALLY EXTERNAL, *and only subordinately and dependently spiritual?*—or is it ESSENTIALLY SPIRITUAL, *and subordinately and dependently external?*

Admit the spirituality of the Christian character and it is not possible that the doctrine of what is termed 'the Apostolical Succession' can be upheld for a moment; for it has to come through the corruptions, abominations, blood, and filth of Popery; and also through the eight thousand 'dumb dogs,' according to Neale and Bishop Tomline, of Protestantism. To establish it you must leave the Scriptures, and go to the Fathers and tradition. One justly observes that 'this is the real ground why, not only the Oxford Tract men, but others beside them, so strenuously contend for the power to appeal to what they call 'the early Church.' A *man*-made ministry is to be defended. It is to be proved, that in ministerial appointment, the *external call is everything*; the *spiritual qualification*, however useful, is still by no means essential; that whoever is appointed by a Bishop, be he spiritual or unspiritual, becomes, *by the mere fact of the appointment*, a legitimate minister of Christ; enabled to regenerate men by baptism, and to nourish this new life by the Lord's Supper; while he who has not this episcopal appointment, no matter how holy, how wise, how useful he may be, is an unauthorized intruder into the sacred office. For this, the *Bible is felt to be insufficient*, and the Fathers are appealed to. But let it be recollected, that *early* did they begin to materialize the beautiful system that had been delivered to them; gradually crusting over, and destroying its vitality, by new deposits of earthliness, till, having passed through all the intermediate stages, it settled in the vast and lifeless pet-

rifaction of Popery. The 'man of sin' would have found no place in the Church, had it been constantly, universally, and practically remembered that, 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' It is for the want of recognising and appreciating the spirituality of the New Testament, the Christian dispensation, that men resort to the *opus operatum* of sacraments, and have the form without the power of godliness.

With respect to 'BAPTISMAL REGENERATION,' I would first observe, that the Church of England in her catechism disclaims it, whatever she may teach otherwise in her office of baptism; she there represents Water as the sign—the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; surely the sign cannot be the thing signified thereby, which is 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' The one is in order, or as a step to the attainment of the other; and in adults, who are truly penitent, and spiritually prepared by the Holy Spirit, to exercise faith in the atoning blood, I deny not but true regenerating grace may be conveyed in the very act of adult water baptism, but then it is by the subject of it having personal faith in the atonement, and mediatorial death of Christ while embracing the ordinance; and not by mere physical and mystical operation. Let it be distinctly understood, that I fully believe in the propriety and necessity of water baptism, as well as the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost.' I am also an advocate for infant bap-

tism,—the difference between us, lies in the nature and extent of those benefits and privileges, which water baptism is intended, *in the holy scriptures*, to convey to the persons, on whom it is confered. I believe it to be an outward *sign*, or signification of an inward and spiritual grace, and in order thereto; and not the inward and spiritual grace itself. It is also an initiation into the visible church of Christ, whereby such are entitled to the means of grace, the ordinances of God's house; the instruction and oversight of His ministers. So far I believe such children in early youth, are much more the subjects of the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and the operations of grace in their hearts, than they otherwise would be; and are much more in the way of becoming actually and truly regenerate by personal repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles, we meet with some who had actually received the Holy Ghost, in His sanctifying operations, before baptism by water was administered. Peter exclaims, 'can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we.' This, to me, is the true scriptural sense of Christian baptism, in which every thing is plain and clear, according to the whole tenor of the New Testament, and to the analogy of Christian faith and practice contained therein. The authority of what is often termed 'Our Church,' and also of 'the Fathers,' is to me, a secondary consideration; and when not set forth and countenanced in the word of God, and particularly where it leads men

astray, and less likely to attain to a knowledge of their true state and character before God, of no consideration at all. Not that I could slight the opinions of the aged and pious; but would give them every consideration that they will bear, in connexion with the standing mind of the Holy Ghost, in the scriptures of God; for I must say with the immortal Chillingworth, '*the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants!*' Fathers have erred, and Councils have erred; but the word of our God shall stand for ever. That is *unerring truth.*

Allow me to remark further on the *effects* of these doctrines; to me they appear perfectly terrible.

The doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration*, whilst unscriptural in itself, is at the same time most injurious and deadly in its consequences. It teaches children what I conscientiously believe to be a lie, and has a tendency, a direct tendency, to mislead them through life, in death, and in eternity, by persuading them that a vast and important work is done, which is not done, but only a preparatory work, in order thereto; and I believe thousands who are taught thus are lulled to sleep in their sins, rocked into carnal security through life, and at last, *die and are damned!* At whose hands the blood of such will be required, is not for me to say; but it surely merits deep and serious consideration in some quarters. Popery, and semi-popish Protestantism, send men to the Priest for pardon and regeneration. True Protestantism—the Pro-

testantism held by our venerable Reformers, teaches men to esteem a truly Christian ministry, and the ordinances of religion; but at the same time sends men to God, to the atonement of Christ, and to the influence and operations of the Holy Spirit, for pardon and regeneration.

Both dogmas exalt the priesthood into an utterly antichristian position, which is truly dangerous to the clergy themselves. They have a direct tendency to inflame the mind with pride, and to fill it with imaginary importance, and uncharitable exclusiveness. They destroy that humility and candour, which ought ever to distinguish the ministers of a meek and lowly Saviour; and induce those lofty airs of official importance, and sacerdotal authority, which, in the present age, only make those who assume them ridiculous and contemptible; while they prove an insuperable barrier to those reciprocations of mutual respect, which are essential to the genuine spirit of Christianity, and to the unity and prosperity of the Christian church. Our Lord has asserted, that a house or a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Very many able and influential members of the Church of England, are opposed to the doctrines of Apostolical Succession and Baptismal Regeneration, as popish and antichristian. The Christian Observer, the most respectable and able of all our periodical works, has attacked them as subversive of Protestantism, and dangerous and ruinous, as well as unscriptural. A *Lay Churchman* has lately put forth a most able work on the subject, entitled,

'*Ancient Christianity.*' In fact, Bishops, Clergy, and Laity are divided on the subject, and are carrying on an open controversy. This is *Schism* with a witness. I am sure if the Apostle Paul had considered baptism in the light in which Oxford tract men view it, he would not have thanked God that he had baptised so few; and if he had imbibed your exclusive spirit, he would not have rejoiced that Christ was preached out of the successional line, and even from not very pure motives. O how unlike is the spirit of Christ to such antichristian dogmas, and to the bigotry, and bitterness so generally manifested where they prevail!

I know that great umbrage has been taken in some quarters, at children having been baptised at a Wesleyan chapel. Rest assured, my dear Sir, that we have the true scriptural Apostolical Succession and Apostolical authority for so doing. Many persons, through ignorance or from worse motives, are constantly enforcing the 'Canon Law,' or law of the priesthood, and forgetting, and keeping out of sight, the 'Statute Law,' or law of the Sovereign, and of the state. You are quite aware that you acknowledge the Queen to be the temporal head of the Church; and as such, the Sovereign, in conjunction with the two other constitutional estates of the realm, can alter, set aside, or abrogate, the temporal and prudential or arbitrary laws of the priesthood. As to the point in hand, the statute law in the case has been given to a suit of 'Kemp v. Wickes, Clerk.' Mr. Wickes,

a clergyman, refused to inter Mr. Kemp's child, who had been baptised in a Dissenting chapel, by a Dissenting Minister. Mr. Kemp brought an action against Mr. Wickes for such refusal; and it was decided in the Court of Arches, by Sir John Nicholl. The learned Judge examined the practice and doctrines of the Christian Church, from the Apostles, till the final revision of the Liturgy, and proved that in *all cases*, where water was used as the element, and the sacred name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, invoked in the act of sprinkling or immersion, then baptism was administered to all Christian ends and purposes; without any particular reference to the person who officiated;—that the Church always abhorred the *iteration* or *repetition* of baptism, even in cases where persons officiated who were deemed heretics, when it was fully proved that water was used, and the person was sprinkled or dipped in the name of the ever blessed Trinity. He then gave it as the judgment of the Court, that such a baptism, administered by any *Dissenting Minister*, or person in holy orders, or pretending to holy orders, *was an efficient and legal baptism*, to all Christian and civil purposes.

To conclude.—Mere orthodoxy, or right opinions, though important in themselves, form but a small part of religion. If it go no further than the head and judgment, as a science merely, or principally, and do not produce personal repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and also righteousness, peace, and joy in the

Holy Ghost, and all the fruits of the Spirit in heart and life—thereby giving the person *justification*, or title to, and *sanctification*, or meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light—it will do but little for us. This is the religion of the New Testament—the religion of Jesus Christ, and nothing mystic and external will supply the place of this *internal* heavenly religion. I will just transcribe a passage from Dr. Christopher (not Archbishop) Potter, who was Chaplain to Charles the First; he suffered much in and for the royal cause, and was sometime Vice Chancellor of Oxford.—He says, 'In Divine Truths, my conscience cannot serve men, or any other Master beside Him who hath his chair in heaven. I like Calvin very well; and I cannot hate Arminius; and for my part, I am verily persuaded, that these two are now where they agree well in the kingdom of heaven; whilst some of their passionate disciples are so eagerly brawling here on earth. Blindfolded, many follow their leaders—believe all their dictates, as if they were divinely inspired, without examining, which eases them of much trouble and difficulty. For some years in my youth, when I was most ignorant, I was most confident; before I knew the true state, or any grounds of those questions, I could peremptorily resolve them all:—and upon every occasion, in the very pulpit, I was railing upon men as heretics. Yet all this while I took upon trust all this that I talked; and knew not what they said or thought, but by relation from others, and from their enemies, and because my conscience in secret

would often tell me, that railing would not carry it in matters of religion, I betook myself seriously and earnestly to peruse the writings of both parties, and to observe and balance the Scriptures produced for both opinions.' O that all would take the same honest, honourable, and Christian method. My dear Sir, you are a young man, and I give you full credit for sincerity: and I feel obliged by your honest candid method in coming to me in person, and endeavouring to bring me off from the errors you suppose and believe I have imbibed and embraced. I wish all were as honest and honourable in their opposition; and my great desire and prayer to God is, that we may be rightly directed and guided into all necessary and saving truth—emphatically the truth as it is in Jesus. But let us go to the fountain head for it, and if we are humble, sincere, and earnest in its pursuit, we shall surely attain unto it.

Probably you may think I have written harshly, and not with the respect becoming me. I can only say this,—I am sure I have not intended it. I must state in plain language what I *conscientiously* believe to be dangerous error; but through the whole, I have felt nothing but personal respect and the most friendly feeling. As I said, I have long learned to distinguish between men's errors and their persons. Wishing you every blessing for body and soul, in time and in eternity,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours respectfully and affectionately,

THOMAS BUSH."

The following, on the same subject, was addressed to a neighbouring Clergyman, and it is supposed about the same time.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I now at length return your pamphlet with respectful thanks. I must beg you to indulge me in a few further observations on the subjects in question. I most certainly am not made a convert to the 'church principles' contained therein. They are not only not supported by Holy Scripture, but really appear to me to be opposed thereunto, both in their elements and tendencies; and were not attempted to be taken up by the clergy, till after the Apostles had gone to their great reward.

I am aware that the Oxford tract writers assert, that the Apostles left 'church principles' in an imperfect state, that they had to be worked out by their successors; that the system so wrought out, reached its perfection in the Nicene age; and that on that age the Church of England has modelled her own hierarchy. This all sounds very high, and very pompous; but unfortunately, *it has not a scriptural proof to stand upon.* It is not 'thus saith the Lord'; but 'I say,' which in the mouth of mortal man, sounds very flat and insipid; and carries no authority along with it. You candidly acknowledged that you did not draw your views from scripture—but

from history,—and that they are the doctrines of 'our church!' Now, my dear Sir, the most rigid Roman Catholic can plead equal authority for every dogma of Popery, and say, these are the doctrines of 'our church,' and I can prove them from ecclesiastical history, aye 1500 years old—even up to the 'early church;' for I believe there is scarce a dogma of Popery, which cannot be traced, directly or indirectly, to the Nicene age. This I shall endeavour very briefly to show.

It is altogether surprising to me, that such high, exclusive, and arrogant pretensions, should be grounded, to use the mildest term possible, on so slender a foundation, viz, that Episcopacy, such as that existing in the Church of England, is of *Divine right*, to the exclusion of every other mode of church government; and in consequence, that all differently governed churches, are no churches—under the uncovenanted mercies of God, and stand in His sight as heathens and publicans. A little cant is used about the 'invisible church,' just to soften the asperity of the language and consequence; but is *practically* to mean just nothing. This is broadly and unhesitatingly asserted by Mr.————; and by yourself more cautiously. A direct inference from all this is, that the Episcopal Clergy of the Established Church, are Christ's sole Vicegerents in the land—to dispense sacraments—rule the church—and to be the only prime ministers of heaven upon earth. Whether Roman Catholics are acknowledged to be 'dearly beloved brethren' or not, I

cannot say; but sure I am that your system is a species of the same genus. This high exclusive privilege must be very gratifying to the clergy of these realms; it can thefore, be no wonder that it is so earnestly struggled for, and so strongly contested,

A question here arises of deep importance. Do we find this clearly revealed in the New Testament? Assuredly not!—The word Bishop, as distinct from, and superior to Elder, or Presbyter, does not there occur once. The Fathers, therefore, must be brought forward, to support the system. But even the early Fathers, after pride and ambition, the sure concomitants of human nature; or, as the Holy Ghost terms it, 'the mystery of iniquity' had begun to work, and Bishops were placed in the chair, as a distinct order from presbyters; these very Fathers themselves never considered the *new system* to be of *Divine right, but a prudential regulation more calculated to promote order and unity.* When churches multiplied, and many elders or presbyters resided in one city, town, or thickly inhabited district, the clergy in their church meetings, placed an elderly presbyter, or eminently wise and gifted brother in the chair; *not of Divine right*, but what they considered *a wise and prudential regulation.* This was the rise of that system which issued in modern episcopacy. Thus what was adopted, *as a prudential regulation*, became, as the church grew more corrupt, to be pleaded for as a standing rule; and eventually, ecclesiastical

rulers grew so intoxicated with power, as to take still higher ground, and plead *Divine right*, to the exclusion of all other systems. *But still without scriptural foundation.*

I have no quarrel with an episcopal form of church government, modestly held, and moderately conducted, as a prudential regulation; for every section of the Christian church, has an undoubted right to make its own prudential regulations, provided they do not exceed scriptural bounds, nor violate true Christian charity. But if men are to assume unscriptural authority —and tell us that the Holy Scriptures are not the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice—deny to others the right of private judgment—and anathematize all but themselves from the pale of the Christian church; such men, so far from working out 'church principles' to their perfection, *have actually worked themselves into 'the apostacy,'* and are in truth, 'wolves in sheep's clothing.'

We will now look into the 'Nicene age,' and endeavour to ascertain whether it comes to the '*perfection*,' or the '*apostacy*.' It is gratifying to admit, that the 'Nicene church' made a noble stand for orthodoxy, in setting forth the doctrine of the Trinity in opposition to the Arian heresy; and there was unquestionably much devotional feeling existing at that period. Many eminent men, such as Chrysostom, Athanasius, Basil, and others, lived and flourished in that age. There

is, however, a vast and striking difference between *Nicene* and *Apostolical Christianity*. The Christian church had gradually receded from her simplicity and piety—lost much of that true internal heavenly mindedness, which results from the indwelling Spirit, and a vital union with Christ,—had gradually adopted a refined species of Gnosticism, which issued in a spurious holiness, wherein virginity, celibacy, and in a word, the ascetic and monastic institution prevailed, and was represented by the above named eminent Fathers themselves, as the height of Christian perfection. Instead of spending their zeal and employing their public discourses on the fundamental principles of 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' producing holiness of heart and life, and every grace of the Spirit, and all this to be shown in domestic and social life; as husbands and wives—parents and children—masters and servants—princes and subjects; instead of teaching men to be uniformly holy in their common labours—'whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, to do all to the glory of God,' the great Divines of that age sadly lost sight of this truly apostolic, spiritual, practical and common sense, Christianity—and extolled virginity, celibacy, a total abstraction from the world—accompanied by prayers, fastings, and great bodily mortifications. The human nature, by these means, was to be assimilated to the angelic, and a mysterious and ineffable union with God was to be attained. Monasteries and Nunneries rapidly increased—

multitudes of both sexes flocked into them :—the truly sincere, to become the dupes of fanatical presumption—some retired to deep regret and secret dispondency; while others, as a substitute for the unnatural and unscriptural violence thus offered to their natures, plunged into secret, and some into open abominations. The writings extant of the most eminent Fathers fully prove this; they admit the evils in order to attempt to correct them, and at the same time use all their talent and eloquence to retain and strengthen the system. Some of the admissions of Chrysostom, Basil, and Jerome, are such as not to admit of translation into any vulgar tongue. The natural consequence of the ascetic and monastic system, was an overwrought fanaticism. Dreams, visions, union with angels, and the most extravagant and bombastical rant, fill up the lives of the saints of the *Nicene period.* Alban Butler, the Roman Catholic translator of Jerome's lives of the Saints, actually pares down many of the most extravagant relations, *as too gross, even for papal readers.* You well know that in the famous Council of Nice, held in the year 325, a canon had nearly passed, imposing universal celibacy on the clergy—and would actually have passed had it not been for the remonstrance of Paphnutius, a bishop of Thebais, who had lost an eye in the late persecution, and who represented it as a grievous hardship for those clergymen who were ordained after their marriage to put away their wives. His sanctity, weight, and influence, prevented the canon from reaching those clergy-

men who were laymen when married, and were afterwards ordained. Even then, however, many would not receive the eucharist from the hands of married clergymen, as being too defiled and earthly to touch the 'terrible mysteries,' as the sacraments were termed.

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, were now magnified into awful importance. This greatly exalted the priesthood, and gave them, in the eyes of the laity, a tremendous power. The 'terrible mysteries' were at the disposal of the priesthood. They could save men by baptizing and admitting to the eucharist, and damn men by excommunication; and excommunication from the church of God, was taught and considered to be worse than death. Then church discipline was wielded for the purposes of superstition and priestly domination, at least much of both was mixed up with its exercise. In the present age it is too lightly esteemed, a feeling arising from a spurious liberalism, and an impatience of restraint, either from God or man. In fact, the church in the Nicene age was grown, and was still further growing into an *unwieldy worldly hierarchy*. There was not only a numerous clergy, but also a large number of virgins, widows, monks, and nuns, all to be trained up in a discipline more severe than the laws of God or nature ever designed; and which was opposed to every feeling of human nature. The simple authority of the word of God, was found to be insufficient to keep in order such an unnatural, and in many respects, unscriptural state of things. The clergy

were obliged either to admit they were wrong, or resort to forced and unnatural measures of severity. This was the reason that the sacraments, and by consequence the priesthood, were armed with such tremendous powers, so that the priesthood could bind or loose in time and in eternity, by means of giving or withholding the 'terrible mysteries.' It is well known that the emperor Constantine defered his baptism till he was dying, and that was deemed an immediate passport to the heavenly world.

Thus, between Nicene and Apostolic Christianity, there is a great difference. And there is also a great difference *between what Paul, Peter, and John, under the plenary influence of the* HOLY GHOST, *say concerning the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, and the statements of Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and others of that age. Were Paul, Peter, and John but in the noviciate of Christianity? and is the church 300 years after to be considered as having carried the system to perfection? He that believes this, can 'swallow a camel' indeed. No, it was an unscriptural policy, forced upon the Church, by the unnatural position she had assumed; and remedies were resorted to, by some perhaps honestly, by others, from self and pride, to attempt to stop the torrent of corruption which the system had produced. The same system is now attempted to be revived by learned and respectable men of the English church, who evidently admire the ascetic and aggrandizing institute of Christianity, (?) as displayed in the Nicene age.

What are the features of the 'apostacy' described in the New Testament? One essential feature is, that 'men shall give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of those who believe and know the truth.' (1 Tim. iv. 3.) Another is, that the clergy shall assume a great and unscriptural stretch of power and authority. (2, Thess. ii. 4.) With these things before our eyes, let us calmly and impartially ask ourselves ;—Does the Nicene Church exhibit *the* PERFECTION OF CHRISTIANITY, *and the true model for all after ages*; or the DEVELOPEMENT OF 'THE APOSTACY?' My own deep and abiding conviction is, that it is the latter.

It really is awful for any man, or number of men, to have the hardihood to assert, that the Holy Scriptures are not, in and of themselves, the only rule, and the sufficient rule of our faith and practice. What does John the Divine, or rather the Holy Ghost say, in the conclusion and winding up of the sacred canon? 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.'

My dear Sir, I have advanced nothing but what I

conscientiously believe to be strictly true, and the conclusions, to my own mind, are satisfactory and irresistible. Though I decidedly differ from you on 'Baptismal Regeneration' and 'Apostolical Succession,' yet I am sure I feel nothing but respect, and the most friendly feeling. My sincere and fervent prayer is,—may God defend the right, and lead the wrong into all saving and necessary truth.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours respectfully and affectionately,

THOMAS BUSH."

A neat chapel was built by himself and friend at Highworth, and opened in 1842. At the opening of the chapel, when just entering, he remarked to a friend, "I have built this chapel according to the pattern showed to me in the mount." It was observed on entering, that while every thing was neat, nothing was superfluous.

In 1843 he was ill and spent some time from home.

During this year Methodism was introduced by the Rev. R. S. Ellis, amidst much opposition, into the village of Longcott. A chapel was

erected by Mr. Bush and his friend soon after, and opened on September 1st, by the Rev. R. Young, who preached two powerful sermons.

In 1844, the Society of Wantage felt the necessity of procuring a better chapel, in a better situation. Mr. Bush had at first some diffidence about this undertaking, but afterwards gave it his cordial support. His plans were laid with caution, but pursued with vigour. His first subscription for the chapel was two hundred and fifty pounds, but the spreading of the walls after the roof was put on, involved unforeseen expence. What he gave and what he lost by the sale of the old chapel and minister's house, he reckoned at five hundred pounds. To the chapel were added a School Room and Vestry. The chapel is in the Gothic style of Architecture, and is an ornament to the town, as well as of great advantage to the cause of God. It was opened by the Rev. Dr. Newton, in 1845. After the opening there was at once a considerable increase to the congregation. The Society has since increased, and a Day School has been commenced, and has proceeded so successfully as

to render necessary the enlargement of the School Room.

The years 1845 and 6 afforded no event in the history of Mr. Bush calling for lengthened remark. His breathing was with difficulty, he could not attend meetings from home, so often as formerly; but was seldom absent from his class or the services of the chapel. He pursued his unostentatious course of usefulness, just as the sun, which, although behind a cloud, continues to shed his light and heat on the world. A part of the summer of 1847, he spent with his friend and relative W. Shippery Esq., at Worthing.

The last public occasion at which he was present, was the opening of a very neat chapel, at Letcomb-Regis, his native village. To the erection of this chapel he contributed fifty pounds, besides ten pounds at the opening services. It was opened September 29th, by the Rev. C. Westlake.

CHAPTER V.

We have observed him in public, let us look at him in private.

You see him seated in the old-fashioned arm-chair in the kitchen, or the more modern and elegant easy-chair in the sitting room. There is his fine open countenance, beaming with intelligenee and benevolence—his forehead high—an aquiline nose—his head bald on the top, and partially covered with grey hairs. His person fine and indicating strength, but for many years of his life there has been a struggle with feebleness and disease.

You listen to his conversation. It is at once cheerful and instructive. It flows forth easily from his stores of reading and observation, like a pure stream coming sparkling from the fountain. It has the grave and the gay in happy

combination: the cheerful seldom light, and the grave never stern. His kind and pleasant remarks easily descend without the appearance of inconsistency into the most serious converse. Anecdote enlivens his conversation, and it abounds with wise observations on men and things.

Around him are his books, and most of them have been not merely read, but well studied. His Library contained about 1300 volumes of the best authors in the English language, chiefly in the departments of Theology, History, Biography, and Poetry.

His mind was eminently "a sound mind;" there was feeling, and some fancy; but a clear, sober judgment, was the presiding and regulating power.

Of his own language he had a good knowledge in its strength and purity. In style he preferred the clear, nervous, concise, to the luxuriant and showy: his taste was formed by those authors whose writings are argumentative and vigorous.

His knowledge was concentrated on two great points: God and man. God and man he

studied, more than the works of man, or the unintelligent works of God. These, however, were not entirely neglected, but made subservient to his higher study. Both God and man he studied in the bible. In the broad page of history, he saw human nature, and the movements of Divine Providence. For the same purpose he gave close attention to passing events, and to the different features of human character around him. His benevolent heart led him to feel a deep interest in every thing concerning man.

"He studied from the life,
And in th' original perused mankind."

With the best English Poets he had a good acquaintance. He often referred to them in conversation in such a way as to show that he had a taste capable of discovering and relishing their beauties. Speaking of Dryden, he referred to Samuel Wesley's censure, who says,

"He made vice pleasing, and damnation shine."

But he spoke with high praise of his com-

pressed view of the evidences of Christianity, at once argumentative and poetical.

"Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts
In several ages born in several parts
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains—ungrateful their advice—
Starving their gains—and martyrdom their price."

With much admiration he sometimes spoke of Milton's Sonnet on his blindness, especially the last lines; perhaps, because it describes feelings similar to his own,—feelings arising from his partial removal from the more active work of God.

"Doth God exact day-labour light denied?
I fondly ask.—But patience to prevent
That murmer soon replies; God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;—
They also serve who only stand and wait."

The tears have been seen to stand in his eyes while hearing read Burns's description of the scene in a pious family in his "Cotter's Saturday

night." This, compared with some of his other poems, is like a bright pure gem thrown amid the mire. Thus he describes family devotion.

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace
The big *ha' Bible*, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that ance did sweet in Zion glide
He wales a portion with judicious care
And 'Let us worship God,' he says, with solemn air."

Singing, and reading the scriptures described, it proceeds:—

"Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King
The *saint*, the *father*, and the *husband* prays:
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear:
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such Society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

Mr. Bush principally excelled in an intimate acquaintance with the men, events, and writings of the period of the Commonwealth, and of

Charles II.: an era, in some respects, the most important in English History. Then the foundations of liberty, civil and religious, were deeply laid; then flourished the greatest names in literature: Milton, the prince of poets, and the great masters in theology. Among these may be named Baxter, with his strong and burning thoughts thrown forth with a noble carelessness; Jeremy Taylor, with his fine imagination, surrounding every thought with beauty; Howe, with his rich luxurience of style; Bates, the 'silver tongued,' with his flow of thought, and facility of expression, like the stream,—clear, smooth, and full; Goodwin, argumentative and convincing. By such men was his taste formed, and with their noble theology was his mind imbued.

The Puritan Divinity led him to attach great importance to what are called the doctrines of grace: the corruption and helplessness of man—the atonement of Christ—the work of the Spirit. The three R's constituted the sum of his theology: "Ruin by Adam—Redemption by Christ—Regeneration by the Spirit."

While, however, he read and valued the works of eminent Divines, one was his master, even Christ. The writers of the Wesleyan School came nearest his own views: and with the volumes of Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke, Benson, and Watson, he was well acquainted.

In Ecclesiastical History he was well read. He was best acquainted with the Nicene age—the age of the Reformation, and that of Cromwell and the Puritans. On account of the view given of the Nicene age of the Christian Church, as well as the important bearing on the Tractarian Controversy, he greatly admired Isaac Taylor's masterly work on "Ancient Christianity and the Oxford Tracts." "That work," said he, "had to me all the charm of a novel. It is the best book ever written on the Tractarian Controversy." Shortly after the reading of this book he went on a visit to the Isle of Wight, and was passing in a steamer from Portsmouth to Ryde, while two gentlemen were conversing very earnestly on the danger to which the Church was exposed from Dissenters. At length they appealed to him. "May not

the Church," replied he, "thank herself for the opposition? Will men be sent to hell for nothing, and cast off to the uncovenanted mercies of God, without asking a reason? Especially when they are conscious that they are upright and sincere?" This naturally introduced the subject of Tractarianism. "I had just risen," he said, "from reading Isaac Taylor—my mind was full of the subject; I showed how corruption gradually crept into the Church—the corrupt state of the Church in the Nicene age—and that the Nicene age was, in the estimation of Tractarians, the perfect model after which they were endeavouring to fashion the English Church. I felt that I knew more of that subject than they did, and they felt it too." One remarked, "Dr. Pusey is a good man." Immoral men," replied he, "are never the first instruments of introducing dangerous errors. These errors entered the Church sanctioned by the names of John Chrysostom, Basil of Cesarea, and others." When about to part the gentlemen said, "Who are you?" "I am," he said, "a Wesleyan Methodist." "Give us your hand," said

they, "you come nearer to us than others."

His spirit was Catholic. Arminian himself, he yet disapproved of the peculiarities of Arminianism being so preached as needlessly to wound the feelings of pious Calvinists. He remembered that the highest doctrines of the Gospel were held in connexion with the peculiarities of Calvinism, and that some of the wisest and holiest of the Christian church had held these views. He attached more importance to the points in which good men agree, than to those in which they differ. When, however, error either denied or displaced the vital doctrines of the Gospel, he gave it a decided opposition. In this he imitated Paul. When the question was the mere eating or refusing meats, pronounced by the Jewish law unclean, he says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. Let every man be fully pursuaded in his own mind."[a] But when Jewish ceremonies were substituted for the atonement of Christ, and justification was sought in the observance of these, and not by

[a] Rom. xiv. 1.

faith in the atonement, his voice was much more stern and decided. "Though we," says he, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."[a]

Of this latter class he believed to be the system called of late years Puseyism or Tractarianism. The system he believed to be the substitution of a gorgeous ceremonial for vital piety; a scrupulous attention to the attitudes and drapery of religion, forgetful of her health and life; nay, rather the skeleton of religion disguised so as to deceive the world with the appearance of life and beauty, while life is extinct. Justification by personal trust in Christ—the assurance of pardon by the Spirit—love arising from that assurance—and obedience from that love, are all on this system excluded. And if these are excluded, what of the life of religion remains? Decent conduct, scrupulous attention to ceremony, *externally;* bold presumption or tormenting fear, *internally;* these are all that can remain in the *best* of its professors. If the

[a] Gal. i. 8.

amount of ceremonial piety is deemed sufficient for salvation, there is *presumption*; since he builds not on the one foundation—Christ, his confidence rests not on Christ, but on himself. If thought insufficient, there is *dread*. The soul, like Noah's dove, goes forth from the only Ark of refuge; without is nought but the wide waste of waters, nothing firm enough for repose; she finds no rest. In the mass of mankind the system will produce, as similar doctrines have ever done, deep immorality, since *priestly absolution* and *the sacraments* are cheap substitutes for *holiness of life*. Hence when invited, on one occasion, to attend where he believed this doctrine was preached, he replied, "I will never knowingly hear Puseyism, it is emphatically what Paul describes, 'having the form of godliness, but denying the power; from such,' he says, '*turn away*.'" His views on this subject are more fully stated in the two letters already given.

To Methodism in doctrine and discipline he was from principle strongly attached. Once indeed he thought of leaving the Connexion: from what cause it is not known. It was pro-

bably not long before Aug. 22nd, 1825, for under that date, we find the following entry.

"I have known several who were very zealous for God and the souls of men, to take offence in consequence of the trials and oppositions they have met with in the prosecution of their designs, and separate from their Brethren. I believe such is the importance of unity and concord in the sight of God, and its importance as a means to give a true picture of religion to the world, that in nineteen cases out of twenty it is a grevious dishonor to Christ, and His holy cause on earth. I solemnly declare and vow that I never will, through any trials from any quarter whatever, as long as the essentials of a church exist, separate from the body of Christians, to which I have the honour and privilege to belong. May I ever act on this principle:—Union is strength, it is of God, and from God. Disunion is ruin, it is of the Devil, and from the Devil. Oh! my God, I beseech Thee in sovereign mercy, for Christ's sake, to ensure my perseverance in faith, hope, and love, and in the most unreserved devotedness to Thee and to Thy cause. Amen, and Amen."*

* To this resolution Mr. Bush was led by reading the following anecdote of Mr. Robert Spence, who, by means of his piety, and God's blessing on his industry, rose, from an obscure station, to occupy, as a Tradesman, one of the most respectable positions in the city of York. The anecdote appeared shortly before the date above-named, in the Magazine for that year, and is instructive.

"It is about twenty-four years since" says the Rev. Robert Johnson,

He felt great confidence in the mode of conducting the affairs of that section of the

"I was stationed in York, where it has long been a custom for the Methodists to have a love-feast on Whit Tuesday; which is generally attended by considerable numbers of people from distant places. A few years before the love-feast to which I refer, there had been considerable disturbances in many of our Societies, and some individuals had left them; which induced several persons, in giving an account of their religious experience, to remark how many years they had been Members of the Society; and to state, that they never had any temptation to leave it. After they had thus expressed themselves, Mr. Spence stood up, and observed, 'My brethren, several of you have spoken of the Lord's gracious dealings with you; and I have remarked that you have generally concluded by telling us how many years you have been in the Methodist Society. One has told us, that he has been seven years; another, twelve; another, fifteen; and another, twenty. Many of you have also said, 'That you never had a temptation to leave it.' I have been thirty-four years in the Society, and I acknowledge before you all, that I once had a very strong temptation to leave it, and to have nothing more to do with the Methodists.' At this remark, a profound silence pervaded the whole assembly, and every eye and every ear was turned towards the speaker. 'Yes,' said he, 'I once had a very strong temptation to leave the Methodists: but I thought within myself, I will do nothing rashly; I will exercise my reason, and weigh carefully the matter on each side, before I come to a conclusion. I reasoned thus: Suppose I leave the Methodists, they can do without me; they will never miss me; they will go on, as they have gone on from the beginning, without me. But, on the other side, how shall I do without them? The little religion I have I obtained among them. Had it not been for the Methodists, for any thing that I know to the contrary, I might, to this day, have remained a cursing, swearing chaise driver.

Christian Church to which he belonged. "Methodism," said he, "has a wiser legislature than Her Majesty's; spiritual men have clearer discernment." Hence, to all its institutions he gave a decided support. Of the Missionary Society, he was District and Circuit Treasurer for many years. Besides his usual annual subscription of five guineas, he often gave a special donation; and, during many years, he attended, annually, several Missionary meetings where he generally presided, and at which he gave liberally.

He was District Treasurer of the New Auxiliary Fund, for the relief of worn out Ministers,

The religious friends that I have, whose sentiments and experience correspond with my own, are all Methodists. The means of grace and religious instruction, by which my soul prospers, I find amongst the same people. Now, if I yield to the temptation, and leave them, what people, what means shall I substitute in their place? Shall I not be in danger of mixing with the world,—of imbibing the spirit of unconverted men,—of losing altogether the religion I possess,—and, in the end, of losing my own soul? When I had thus reasoned on the case, the force of the temptation was completely broken; and, having obtained help of God, I continue to this day.' These observations, made by this good man, were very appropriate to the occasion; they produced a great effect at the time; and, I believe, left a salutary impression on the minds of all who were present."

and Ministers' Widows. This subject he was accustomed to introduce at the September Quarterly meetings, as well as at the Financial District meeting, in the same month. A consequence was, that in the Wantage Circuit, of which he was Circuit Steward from the time of its formation, the average of six-pence per member was always raised, though the Societies are principally composed of farmers' labourers. To a great extent this may be attributed to the cordial co-operation of the leaders. An excellent paper on this subject, written by him, has appeared since his death, in the Wesleyan Magazine for Oct. 1848. "The writer of this paper" he remarks, "resides in a very small town, not the head of Circuit, and he has generally at the proper time, met the whole Society on a Sabbath evening after the public service, and endeavoured very concisely to state the righteous and truly scriptural principle on which the measure is based. By far the greater part of our members, consisting of something more than one hundred, are poor, and some distressingly so; yet in a cheerful and truly Christian spirit,

we have every year nearly doubled our average, so far as our own individual Society is concerned."

"What are your views" it was asked, "of the state of mind and conduct we should preserve with reference to the decisions of church authorities, especially of the decisions of Conference?" "We should preserve a state of mind more disposed to approve than to censure. Though obliged to question the wisdom of a measure; yet, where submission is not sinful, we should practically submit, though we may mildly protest. Should a requirement be sinful, we must obey God rather than man."

"In politics" said he, "I may call myself a very moderate conservative. If I must be ruled I would rather be ruled by St James than by St. Giles." Moderate men of different political names are not far distant from each other.

Human nature he studied; and his conversation was rendered interesting, by his remarks on certain specimens of human nature he himself had witnessed. Tracts had been distributed in Lamborne, but from some cause their distribu-

tion had been discontinued. He was met by an old man who asked the reason. "Why" said Mr. Bush, "they did you no good, you were unconverted then, and you are unconverted now." "My wife" replied he, "used to read them over *Zundays*, and they *jogged* my conscience, and kept things a *leetle* alive."

Of another he asked a subscription and was refused. Mr. Bush reminded him that God could take from him his money. "How can I lose my money? Is it not in the Funds, and don't I receive the interest every six months?" "But," replied Mr. Bush, "God can *quarter* a doctor upon you for six months." This actually occured: he had a long illness.

Joe Palmer was a Local-Preacher, possessing one of those unpolished but vigorous minds, so many of which have been, by Methodism, brought forth into activity and usefulness. His discourses were marked by strong thought and striking comparison; sometimes, however, bordering on the ludicrous.

Joe was the rough woodman with his strong axe, to hew down the stubborn trees of the

forest, which he leaves for others to smooth and polish. Mr. Bush often related some of his sayings. Professors' children grown familiar with the Gospel, he likened to birds hatched in a belfry; "the bells ring and ring and ring, but you are neither charmed nor alarmed." Gospel hardened sinners, he said, are "like the Blacksmith's dog, he sleeps near the anvil, the spiles (sparks) fly around, but he sleeps on; any other dog in the town would fly for his life."

Joe was popular and useful, and often laboured in the villages in the neighbourhood of Wantage, into which Mr. Bush was the means of introducing Methodism. Sometimes he encountered rude mobs. His wife was for some time his persecutor. On his return from preaching, on Sabbath evenings, he would often find that his wife was in bed, the house in darkness, and various household utensils placed in the doorway that he might fall over them. At length she was converted: the change was great. "I don't know," said Joe, "whether she will not after all get the start of me."

In his latter years he received some aid from

a fund, raised by contributions at the Quarterly Meetings, in aid of poor Local Preachers.*

A convert of Joe Palmer's was farmer Mitchell, of Shefford, of whom we have spoken. He went to be amused by his quaint sayings. Joe's strong and striking remarks laid hold on his conscience, so that he

"Who went to mock, remained to pray."

Farmer Mitchell became a Local Preacher, and for many years was known as a laborious and

* Joe Palmer was one of the same class of minds as Josiah Gregory, whom Dr. A. Clarke has immortalized. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a *tinkling cymbal*."—(1 Cor. xiii. 1.) Under this passage he remarks,—"I have quoted several passages from heathens of the most cultivated minds in *Greece* and *Rome* to illustrate passages of the sacred writers. I shall now quote one from an *illiterate collier of Paulton*, in *Somerset;* and as I have named *Homer*, *Horace*, *Virgil*, and others, I will quote *Josiah Gregory*, whose mind might be compared to a diamond of the first water, whose native splendour broke in various places through its incrustations, but whose brilliancy was not *brought out* for want of the hand of the lapidary. Among various energetic sayings of this great, unlettered man, I remember to have heard the following: 'People of *little religion* are always *noisy;* he who has not the love of God and man filling his heart is like an *empty waggon* coming *violently* down a *hill:* it makes a *great noise*, because there is *nothing in it*.'"

useful Preacher in different places now forming parts of the Newbury, Hungerford, Wantage, and Swindon Circuits.

When Mr. Bush was a Local Preacher they often journeyed together; and together, we have seen, they introduced Methodism into Childrey. Mr. Mitchell would often ride forty miles on a Sunday, and preach three times. Like Joe, he was an out-doors Preacher. While preaching, on one occasion, in the open air, a farmer rolled a cheese into the midst of his congregation, intimating that to get cheese was his object in preaching. He directed the cheese to be left where it was till his sermon was finished, when he divided it among the poor present. His death was almost sudden. He had preached at Shefford on the Sabbath, and in his sermon had intimated that, probably, some one of the congregation would die before the following Sabbath. He purposed to preach there on the Thursday following, on his return from Newbury market. For many years it had been his custom to preach at Shefford once a fortnight, on a week evening: in that place he had preached from

more than six hundred different texts. Feeling unwell on that evening, he proceeded home, and died before the Sabbath. His death occurred April 12th, 1810.

From this digression let us return and view Mr. Bush as a "man of God."

The ruling principle of his life was *Devotedness to God;* subordinate to this, and ruled by it, was *Benevolence.* "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."[a] After hearing a discourse on this text one Sunday morning he remarked,—"that is the rule by which I have been endeavouring to walk for more than thirty years." It is, perhaps, more than any other, a test of the depth and purity of a man's religion. The religion of a man entirely devoted to God, consists not in forsaking some sins, or in performing some duties, though both must be done; but it is the ever-present, all-pervading feeling of love, the ever-living and ever-operating sense of God. The rule supposes the production of love by the Divine Spirit, "for the fruit of the Spirit is

[a] 1 Cor. x. 31.

love;" hence it supposes a regenerate heart; but it supposes also constant communion with the God of love, and love ever rising to its source, constantly aspiring to its object. A love which travels out of self and dwells in God, which forgets self in her efforts to promote his glory, and while, to this end, employing all her energies, finds her highest happiness in its promotion.

Such a motive is *pure;* indeed it is purity itself. It bears the soul far above every thing selfish, earthly, and impure, into a high and holy region, where the human soul is moved by the motives of angels. It unites man with all holy created beings; they are one in feeling, one in object,—the feeling is love, the end "the glory of God." The motive is *happy* as pure. Every act comes from the root of love, and bears the fruit of peace. In the feeling, in the act, and after the act, there is sweetness.

It is also *beneficent* to man. "The glory of God" is sought to be advanced by the promotion of man's happiness. Hence it harmonizes all the interests of the universe; the happiness of the individual Christian, the happiness of the

world, and the honor of God, all grow from one principle.

The principle is capable of application *to every act.* The little acts of life are elevated by it, and the great are truly great. It gives *unity* to the character. The character is all of a piece; one principle goes through life. It operates under *all circumstances.* A man moved by circumstances will change with circumstances. He who does a right act because man smiles, will forsake it when he frowns. A man moved by right principle will act well as long as principle lives. This motive derives its power, not from circumstances, but direct from God. So long, and so far as man is by it connected with God, he partakes of his immutability. He is found in the path of duty, whether it be rough or smooth, amid the sunshine or the storm.

Such is the Christian; such was Mr. Bush. Hence in the few entries he has left we find many expressions like the following, all expressing the ruling feeling of his heart—entire devotedness:—"I truly take God's cause, and

Christ's work for my sole business on earth." "My one pursuit on earth by self dedication and solemn covenant to God." "One hundred pounds or one thousand pounds per annum shall make no difference." "Most unalienably given to God, and his great cause on the earth, both in body, soul, time, and property."

He was accustomed on the 11th of March, his birth day, to renew his covenant with God. He used for this purpose, a solemn and comprehensive form drawn up by himself, signed and sealed.* These covenant engagements he felt to be solemnly binding, "*It is*" he remarks, "*no light thing to break a bond with God.*" Most fully did he apply this principle to the use of property. He felt himself to be the Lord's Steward. His property was laid out to advance the cause of Christ, as the most faithful steward would lay out his lord's money, to accomplish his lord's purposes. Many have adopted the plan of devoting a certain proportion of their income to charitable uses. It is said that Lord Chief Justice Hale, the Rev.

* See a copy of this in the Appendix.

Dr. Hammond, and the Rev. Dr. Annesley, gave a tenth part of their income; Archbishop Tillotson, and Dr. Watts, a quarter; Mrs. Rowe, the Hon. Robert Boyle, and others a half. For himself he pursued the "more excellent way" recommended by Mr. Wesley.

"The generality of Christians," he remarks, "usually set apart something yearly, perhaps a tenth or even one-eighth part of their income, whether it arise from yearly revenue, or from trade, for charitable uses. A few I have known, who said, like Zaccheus, 'Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.' O that it would please God to multiply these friends of mankind, these general benefactors!

"Besides those who have a stated rule, there are thousands who give large sums to the poor; especially when any striking instance of distress is represented to them in lively colours.

"I praise God for all of you who act in this manner. May you never be weary of well-doing! May God restore what you give, sevenfold, into your own bosom! But yet I show unto you 'a more excellent way.'

"You may consider yourself as one in whose hands the Proprietor of heaven and earth, and all things therein, has lodged a part of his goods, to be disposed of according to his direction. And his direction is, that you should look upon yourself as one of a certain number of indigent persons, who are to be provided for out of that portion of his goods wherewith you are entrusted. You have two advantages over the rest: the one, that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive;' the other, that you are to serve yourself first, and others afterwards. This is the light wherein you are to see yourself and them. But to be more particular: first, if you have no family, after you have provided for yourself, give away all that remains. This was the practice of all the young men at Oxford who were called Methodists. For example: one of them had thirty pounds a year. He lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two-and-thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received a hun-

dred and twenty pounds. Still he lived as before on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two. Was not this 'a more excellent way?' Secondly, if you have a family, seriously consider before God, how much each member of it wants, in order to have what is needful for life and godliness. And in general, do not allow them less, nor much more, than you allow yourself. Thirdly, this being done, fix your purpose, to 'gain no more.' I charge you in the name of God, do not increase your substance! As it comes daily or yearly, so let it go: otherwise you 'lay up treasures upon earth.' And this our Lord as flatly forbids as murder and adultery. By doing it, therefore, you would 'treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.'

"But suppose it were not forbidden, how can you, on principles of reason, spend your money in a way which God may *possibly forgive*, instead of spending it in a manner which he will *certainly reward?* You will have no reward in heaven for what you *lay up;* you will, for what you *lay*

out. Every pound you put into the earthly bank is sunk: it brings no interest above. But every pound you give to the poor is put into the bank of heaven. And it will bring glorious interest; yea, and, as such, will be accumulating to all eternity."[a]

The writer has sufficient ground for saying that with an income amounting to something less than seven hundred pounds per annum, he gave not less than five hundred pounds every year. After supporting in a very plain manner his own establishment, and exercising Christian hospitality, all the rest he gave away. The purposes for which he employed his property were; 1st, the erection of chapels; 2nd, the support of the ministry in his own, and the Wantage and Swindon circuits; 3rd, Aiding various religious and benevolent Institutions, especially the Bible and Missionary Socities, and the Connexional Funds; and 4th, the relief of the poor. All this was the result of solemn dedication of himself to God. Speaking of two men who gave very liberally, he said, "the one

[a] Wesley's Works, vol. vii. p. 34.

is naturally benevolent, and would be benevolent were he an infidel; the other is naturally otherwise,—in him it is the sole result of Christian principle." In Mr. Bush, a disposition which without religion would have been kind, was sanctified and elevated by his entire devotedness to God. Indeed benevolence in him was a feeling difficult to resist. Often did he say that he would not give so much to beggars, but his benevolence never allowed him to execute his purpose. In distant parts of the country he was sometimes recognized by members of the wandering tribes. His kindness extended, also, to the domestic animals.

He was much pleased with reading, not long before his death, the memoir of Thos. Wilson, Esq., who pursued a plan of usefulness similar to his own. "Besides" says the Rev. J. A. James, "erecting several large chapels at his own risk, and mainly at his own cost, he contributed in sums from fifty to five hundred pounds, to the enlargement and erection of eighty other chapels, and in smaller amounts to hundreds more. He could have spent little less

than fifty or sixty thousand pounds in the service of his Lord." Mr. Bush admired his mode of giving small sums to so many objects. He thought this mode less showy and more useful than that of giving very large sums to a few. "Your mode of usefulness," it was said, "is similar." "Yes" he replied, "but my sphere is a nut-shell compared with his." "Still" it was answered, "the principle is the same." When, however, asked to do what he thought he could not do, he sometimes said, "I speak as a fool, but there is no man in the Connexion who does more than I do, in proportion to my ability. I except," adds he, "the poor man who gives the bread out of his mouth."

His devotedness was exhibited not only in giving but in doing. With some it is more easy to give than to work. When he retired from business his purpose was to be "in spirit a Travelling Preacher." The loss of speech prevented this. He was then confined almost to two modes of usefulness,—letter writing and the management of his property for God. When speech was restored he assisted at many

Missionary meetings annually. He attended the Quarterly meetings in his own, and the Wantage and Swindon, circuits. He was District Treasurer for the Missionary Society, and worn-out Ministers' Fund. With his friend Mr. Davis, he was for many years Superintendant of the Sunday School, and there he attended every Sabbath when able. Chapel building he superintended, the poor and the sick he visited. He formed, as we have seen, a plan of visiting the poor in Lamborne every year. His class was large. In the spiritual welfare of his members he felt a deep interest. An hour, from three to four on Mondays, he spent in prayer for the members of his class individually.

We have remarked that his spirit was *Catholic*. "I am," said he, "in spirit a member of the Evangelical Alliance." For many years he was, we have seen, united in friendship and in works of usefulness, with some excellent members of the Society of Friends. Death alone severed that friendship; it is, however, a question whether Christian friendship ever dies. Between him and the Rev. J. Cox, an excellent Baptist Minister,

and a native of Lamborne, there was a close intimacy. "I feel with him" said he, "a great oneness of spirit." They differed in opinion; but these differences they had debated without destroying their friendship. Of late years they felt it most profitable to dwell on those great truths by which both their souls were fed.

While Catholic, he was decidedly *Evangelical.* His Spiritual life emanated from Christ and his cross. The atonement of Christ was not only an article of his creed, but the ground of his trust, the support of his hope, the source of his love.

His *humility* was a veil which partially concealed, but beautified, his character. Of himself he spoke but little, and with much humility.

His *temper* was such as would, without religion, have been called good; but grace sweetened it. One who resided in the family, as a servant, for several years during the life of his mother, says, she never saw him out of temper but once, and then in a manner such as in most others would have been unnoticed.

His *religious experience* was not highly joyous, but very peaceful. His was a cheerful piety.

His soul was like the summer's lake, spreading its calm waters in the sunshine.

His *spirit was devotional.* Those much with him would often observe him engaged in mental prayer.

His *uprightness* procured him a high character with those who could not appreciate his religion.

Many wondered that one so cheerful and social remained unmarried. He himself thought that had he married after his mother's death, he should have done better. The reason, probably, was, a fear lest those plans of usefulness to which he devoted his property and life might be thereby interrupted. "Alone on the earth," he often remarks, "for the great cause of Christ, a way-faring man."

As a *friend,* he was wise and sympathizing. He had a mind to counsel, a heart to feel, and, if needed, a hand to relieve. To all, even the poorest, he was always accessible.

Had he no failings? Yes;—but

"E'en his failings leaned to virtue's side."

His kindness laid him open to imposition.

Greater authority preserved in his family would have saved him from annoyances.

In the last few years of his life there was much to try him. He was afflicted by the afflictions of others. And, excellent as he was, the shafts of calumny reached even him.

CHAPTER VI.

We have followed him through life,—let us now attend him to the bed of death. For some time previous, his conversation was such as to show that his mind was familiar with the contemplation of his last great change. To the experience of Baxter when he was at the close of life, he often adverted in such a way as to show that his own was similar. Comparing, at this period, his present, with his former experience, Baxter remarks, "My judgment is much more for frequent and serious meditation on the heavenly blessedness than it was in my younger days. I then thought that a sermon on the attributes of God, and the joys of heaven, was not the most excellent; and was wont to say, 'Every body knoweth that God is great and good, and that

heaven is a blessed place; I had rather hear how I may attain it.' Nothing pleased me so well as the doctrine of regeneration and the marks of sincerity, because these things were suitable to me in that state; but now I had rather read, hear, meditate, on God and heaven, than on any other subject. I perceive that it is the object which altereth and elevateth the mind; which will resemble that which it most frequently feedeth on. It is not only useful to our comfort to be much in heaven in believing thoughts; it must animate all our other duties, and fortify us against every temptation and sin. The love of the end is the poise or spring which setteth every wheel a-going, and must put us on to all the means; for a man is no more a Christian indeed than he is heavenly."[a]

On Oct. 11th, his last birth-day, he solemnly renewed his covenant with God. An entry on this day he made in pencil: the only one for several years.

"O God, I solemnly give myself afresh to Thee, to be

[a] Baxter's Works, vol. 1. p. 381.

entirely set apart for Thee, in promoting Thy spiritual kingdom. O, spare me as long as Thou canst use me for Thy glory."

Oct. 20 he met his class for the last time, and said he never felt more determined to be entirely devoted to God. At a Lovefeast, held a few Sundays before his death he said, adverting to recent trying circumstances, that his communion with God had not been interrupted by them.

A few of his entries are remarkable. We give the facts, and leave others to speculate. In different places are the following. "I will add to his years fifteen, 1832." "I will add to his days fifteen, 1832." In the margin of his copy of Dr. A. Clarke's Comment, by the side of the last note in Daniel is one still more singular. We give the scripture passage and the note.

"But go thou thy way till the end *be:* for "thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end "of the days."[a]

"Here is proper advice for every man. 1. Thou

[a] Daniel xii. 13.

"hast a *way*—a *walk in life*, which God has as-
"signed thee; *walk in that way*, it is *thy way*.
"2. There will be an *end* to thee of all earthly
"things. Death is at the door, and eternity is
"at hand; *go on to the end*—be faithful unto
"death. 3. There is a *rest* provided for the
"people of God. Thou shalt *rest;* thy *body*,
"in the *grave;* thy *soul*, in the *Divine favour*
"here, and finally in *paradise*. 4. As in the
"promised land there was a *lot* for *each* of *God's*
"*people*, so in heaven there is a *lot* for *thee*.
"*Do not lose it, do not sell it, do not let thy*
"*enemy rob thee of it. Be determined to stand*
"*in thy own lot at the end of thy days. See that*
"*thou keep the faith; die in the Lord Jesus, that*
"*thou mayest rise and reign with him to all*
"*eternity. Amen.*"

The lines printed in italics he has underlined. In the margin he writes,--"☞W. and S. (Wantage and Swindon) H—s (holiness) to the Lord. ☞ O for fifteen years—2nd Nov. 1832." He repeats—"O for fifteen years, 2nd. Nov. 1832." He died 2nd Nov. 1847—fifteen years precisely. *

* It is stated of Bishop Jewell, that long before his final sickness he

Wednesday Oct. 27th, was the day of the Annual Missionary Meeting. The members of the Deputation with other ministers were expected to dine at his house. On their arrival they were informed that he had been taken ill that morning. For some time previous his nights had been very disturbed. Like Dr. Watts, he was subject to Insomnia, or continual wakefulness; and, with Job, could say, "Wearisome nights are appointed unto me."[a]

On the morning of Wednesday he said he had a dreadful night. Referring to the Missionary meeting, he expressed a wish that it was over. After breakfast he was sick. He became afterwards unconscious that the meeting was to take place. Going into the sitting room, he fell against the book shelves. He was laid on the sofa and soon taken to bed.

In the evening he was sensible, and inquired about the Missionary meeting. A favourable report being given, he said "Praise the Lord."

predicted its distant approach; and when actually overtaken by it, he foretold the precise day of his death.

a Job vii. 3.

The writer remained with him that night. At two a. m. he took tea, and was composed till five. He then took medicine, and we afterwards engaged in prayer in which he joined heartily. His mind was sweetly calm. This he more than once expressed, adding—"I can trust in Christ." But referring to the period when he was taken ill, he said "my mind was a tempest, a tempest."

On Thursday morning he requested that the family might come into his room for prayer. The Rev. Joseph Stinson, a member of the Missionary Deputation, engaged in prayer, in which he joined heartily, and he afterwards conversed with freedom. He appeared subsequently to suffer from the excitement. In the evening he was worse. Mr. Kennard, the Surgeon, remained with him the night.

On Friday Dr. West saw him. Little hope of his recovery was given. Before he took his medicine he asked a blessing, but after taking it, said—"it is of no use, I shall die."

On Saturday his spirits were low. When asked how he was, he said his head and limbs

ached. In the afternoon he was much in mental prayer. To the servant he said—"live to God, I am going. I said I should die this winter, about Michaelmas, did I not? I am taken for death. Praise the Lord." He burst into tears. Being asked if he had a desire to live, he said: "Not for a moment if it is the Lord's will to take me out of it all. But I am fully resigned to die or live." In the afternoon the writer saw him. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord shall deliver him in all his trouble, the Lord shall make all his bed in his sickness &c." was a scripture passage repeated to him. "Yes" said he, "I have been a father to the poor, and they pray for me—poor things they have an interest in my life. But" he added "that is not the foundation." "No" it was replied, "other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid—Christ Jesus."

On one of the days of his illness he said he had a dreadful conflict with Satan; but it was over. He was afterwards calm.

Sunday he was cheerful. It was thought that he was better. He wished to be left alone for

half an hour. He was heard praying earnestly that God would fully sanctify his soul, and take him to himself.

On Monday he was removed to another room. He was greatly excited. After he was a little recovered he said, "they have brought me here to die. I shall never go out of this room till I am carried out." He afterwards said "I am truly thankful I have done what I have with my property. As far as my understanding has led me, I have spent it to the glory of God, and the good of my fellow-creatures."

Tuesday he lay speechless. At six in the evening he died. Thus passed from the world a man of high integrity, cultivated mind, simple manners, warm benevolence, humble and sincere piety. In him the poor have lost a father, his friends a sympathizing counsellor, and the Christian Church one of her best supports and ornaments.

By his Will he left one hundred pounds to the Bible Society, one hundred pounds to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and three hundred pounds to other Connexional Funds. Claims

on Chapels, to a considerable amount, were cancelled. Ten pounds per annum he left to the Day School. Provision was made for his housekeeper and man, with a small legacy to the maid-servant. Various other legacies were left, varying from one hundred pounds to one thousand pounds each.

At the Quarterly Meetings of the Wantage and Hungerford Circuits resolutions were passed, expressive of high esteem for his character.

At the District Meeting, held at Witney, in May, 1848, the following resolution was proposed by the Rev. J. W. Button, Chairman, and seconded by the Rev. P. Orchard, and unanimously carried.

"That this meeting, deeply affected at the demise of Thomas Bush, Esq., of Lamborne, wishes to express its sense of his many public virtues and excellencies. As a member of the District Meeting, he at all times showed himself to be the ardent lover of Methodism, and liberal supporter of its Institutions. His counsels were distinguished by sound sense, affability, and Christian courtesy. The Offices which he held

to the Missionary Society and Auxiliary Fund, as Treasurer, were conscientiously and faithfully performed, and his name will long be cherished as worthy of sincere respect. Though the District has lost a valuable counsellor and a practical friend, yet would we bow in perfect submission to the all-wise decree of Jehovah, saying,—'not as we will but as thou wilt.'"

A marble Tablet, with the following inscription, has been erected in the Chapel, at Lamborne:—

"THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED
TO THE MEMORY OF THOS. BUSH, ESQ., OF NORTH FARM,
(WHO DIED NOVR. 2, 1847, AGED 62 YEARS,)
BY HIS FRIEND AND RELATIVE
WM. SHIPPERY;
IN ESTIMATION OF HIS SINCERE PIETY,
CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS,
AND UNOSTENTATIOUS CHARITY,

'HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.'

THE DECEASED WAS CHIEFLY INSTRUMENTAL IN THE ERECTION OF THIS CHAPEL AND SCHOOL-ROOM."

"He being dead yet speaketh." To the *young* he "speaketh" of the excellence of youthful piety. From the age of twenty till past sixty-one he was devoted to God. Piety, commenced in youth and continued to age, is like the sun on a lovely summer's day—cheering in his rising, shedding blessings over the world through the day, calm and glorious in his setting. Such was his.

He speaks of the *proper end of living*. The best end of living is the *honour of God*, and *good of man*, in connexion with *our own salvation*. Happiness, when sought *directly*, often flees from us; when almost forgotten in earnest effort to promote God's glory, and man's welfare, she comes unsought into the heart. The Christian who seeks only to luxuriate in spiritual enjoyment generally loses it; he who is anxious for comfort only, forgetting usefulness, fails to secure either; while by him who looks beyond comfort in seeking to be useful, both are secured. Why is this? Love equally promotes happiness and usefulness; its absence leaves the man destitute of both. A carelessness for God's honour

proves it absent. Let a Christian care for God's honour, and God will care for his comfort and safety. Hence, in seeking to do good, Mr. Bush found peace.

His life shows the best *use of Property*. With him the doctrine of Stewardship was no abstraction, it was a living, acting principle. "I am God's man," he often remarks; hence he withheld not his *property*, because he had given to God, *himself*.

Stewardship supposes that what one has in possession, he has not as a property, but as a trust; and that for the discharge of that trust, the will of the Lord is to supply the rule, and his honour and interest are to be the end.

God is the great, the sole proprietor, "the silver and the gold are his,"—how may His will be known? The answer is,—from His word. From that word man learns that he is, 1. To supply his own needs,—a man is to work that he may "eat his own bread." 2. He is to supply the needs of those dependent on him,—he is to "provide for his own." 3. He is to give. Is a man rich? He is to be "rich in good works, ready to distribute,

willing to communicate."[a] Is he a labourer? He is to work "with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."[b]

Does he ask,—how much? the general rule is,—"as God hath prospered him."[c] Minute rules are not given, but the proper principle is described and enjoined. To adapt minute rules to all circumstances, would swell them beyond bounds; besides, minute rules, without a right principle, would be evaded. Principle is above rule, and principle will guide where rule gives no direction. The principle is *self-denying love*, and of that, Christ's own love is the pattern. "Ye know" says Paul, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty may be rich."[d]

This principle asks not, how can I enlarge self-gratification? but, how can I contract this, that I may more fully gratify love? This was Mr. Bush's question; hence, he resolved never to alter his mode of living whatever in-

a 2 Tim. ix. 18. b Eph. iv. 28. c 1 Cor. xvi. 2. d 2 Cor. viii. 9.

crease of property he might possess. Does a Christian wish to know how much he should give? Let him ask, how much has God given me? how much do I need for myself and family? and how much should be employed to do good to the world? Let conscience preside in the deliberation, let her seek light from God's word, let her call to her council zeal for God, love to man, as well as a regulated self-love, and her decisions will be practically right. Nevertheless, a man should apply the general rules of the Bible, so as to have some definite rule for his own guidance.

Is this an unhappy way of spending money? Is there not as much happiness in gratifying love, as in gratifying our senses, our covetousness, or our pride? Mr. Bush was proof that there is, and more. He felt the blessedness of giving, the luxury of doing good. He enjoyed money in giving, far more than the miser does in hoarding. How different his Christian cheerfulness from the miserable anxiety of those who live only to grasp and to hoard. And, then, what other mode of spending money can give equal

satisfaction on the bed of death? "I feel truly thankful" he says "that I have done what I have with my property. As far as my understanding has led me, I have spent it for the glory of God and the good of my fellow-creatures." The true way of enjoying money, is to do good, and to love to do it.

His life exhibited a *wise way of doing good.* Some pursue an erratic mode of usefulness. They love to act alone. They construct a machine all whose movements, nay, whose very being, depends on themselves; hence, when they fail, it falls to pieces. Few men are called to pursue such an isolated course, no man is called to seek it. Some may be pressed into it by circumstances, by conscience, as were Luther and Wesley; and then such a man forms a centre, around whom others collect. But if there is an organization calculated to accomplish the great end of the Christian Church,—the preservation and spread of holiness,—with that he is called to unite. In Methodism, Mr. Bush found an organization admirably adapted to spread holiness in the destitute region around him, and with

that he connected himself. The consequence is, that all his plans are as vigorously prosecuted now, as they were even during his life. Such a mode of doing good is less flattering to the doer, less depends upon the man, but it is more permanently useful.

His life shows how to secure a "patient continuance in well doing." Daily communion with God repaired, strengthened, and purified his piety. Humble, believing prayer, was the "golden pipe" communicating with God, the source of grace, and conveying the "golden oil"[a] of grace into the heart. Hence his light was no fitful glare—flashing and expiring; no unsteady blaze; but it shone steadily and clearly for more than forty years.

His religion was faith, daily receiving love down, through Christ, from the God of love; and then, working by love, to honour God, and bless man.

His "end" was "peace." "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from

[a] Zech. iv. 12.

henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."[a]

"As some tall tow'r, or lofty mountain's brow,
Detains the sun illustrious, from its height,
While rising vapours and descending shades
With damps and darkness drown the spacious vale;
Undamp'd by doubt, undarken'd by despair,
Philander thus augustly rears his head,
At that black hour which gen'ral horror sheds
On the low level of th' inglorious throng;
Sweet peace, and heav'nly hope, and humble joy,
Divinely beam on his exalted soul;
Destruction gild, and crown him for the skies,
With incommunicable lustre bright."[b]

a Rev. xiv. 13. b Dr. Young, Night II.

APPENDIX.

"A SOLEMN ACT OF DEVOTION; OR SELF-DEDICATION TO GOD."

"Everlasting God! the fountain of life, who fillest, supportest, and quickenest all things; I bow myself as in Thy presence, and unfeignedly adore Thee as the former of my body, as the father of my spirit, and as the constant preserver and benefactor of both. I confess myself to be under infinite and every possible obligation to love and to serve Thee with all the powers of that excellent nature Thou hast given me; but in innumerable instances I have greatly abused it, and thereby forfeited my life. Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to live on the face of Thy earth, or to taste the various goodness which is here provided for Thy children. The noble organs of my body, and powers of my soul, I have yielded as instruments of unrighteousness to the service of sin; most justly, there-

fore, might I now have been languishing under sickness, racked by tormenting pains, or cut down by the hand of death,—but, adored be Thy mercy, Thou hast not rewarded me according to my deserts, Thou still waitest to be gracious, and hast often interposed by Thy kind and Almighty arm, to rescue me from the grave. For ever magnified be Thy grace which permits me yet to live, yea to live surrounded with such blessings of various kinds,—what thanks can I render to Thine Infinite Majesty for this unspeakable favour? I praise, I extol Thee with all my spirit and strength. *I adore Thee as my life, and the length of my days, the Guardian, Restorer, and Preserver of my frame,* and,—*speciality* for *speciality*, *God is witness*,—I here, with a prostrate and most truly grateful soul, *consecrate and give myself absolutely to Thee.* I most solemnly avouch Thee Almighty Jehovah, (as in Thine infinite goodness Thou hast been pleased to permit me) for my Father, my Portion, my King, and my God. The life which Thou gavest me, and hast thus graciously preserved, I most unfeignedly devote to Thee, to be regulated by Thy laws, spent in Thy service, and conducted in Thy fear. I renounce every thing as my happiness in comparison of Thy favour; and to please and obey Thee shall be the

chief care and governing principle of all my future life. All my concerns, of body and soul, I most gratefully assign into Thy hands, rejoicing that thou wilt condescend to direct and manage them for me. I now promise through Thy help to be always contented, yea, will endeavour to be always thankful, however Thou art pleased to deal with me or mine, being assured that Thou knowest what is good for me, infinitely better than I can judge for myself. Behold, O Lord, I am Thine; Thine by the most sacred and inviolable ties, made by Thy power, maintained by Thy bounty, guarded by Thy providence, restored by Thy favour when going down into the pit, and by the blood of Thy dear Son redeemed from the power of eternal darkness and death; deal therefore, with Thy servant as seemeth good in Thy sight. *Whatever substance, knowledge, influence, time, or any other talent, I now do or ever shall possess, I most heartily devote to Thine honour and service. Thy will shall be the rule, and Thy glory the end of all my future actions.* Choose, O Lord God, most wise and most merciful, my portion and my lot for me, guide me by Thy counsel through all the ways of the present world, and at last receive me to Thy kingdom and glory in the other.

To Thee, likewise, O Christ! my gracious Redeemer, the Son of God and Saviour of the world, I most unfeignedly devote myself and all that I have. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, and Wisdom, and Riches, and Strength." I was lost but Thou savedst me; a prisoner of death, but Thou diedst that I might live; I am Thine for Thou hast loved me and washed me from my sins, and redeemed me by Thy blood. I now, therefore, from my soul, absolutely renounce whatever is inconsistent with Thy property and claim in me. I sincerely abjure the world and the flesh, as far as they at all oppose the authority of Christ, whom alone I now avouch as my Proprietor and King. I here bow myself before Thee, in token of the deepest subjection of my body, soul, and spirit to Thy government. I bind myself, as by a solemn oath of allegiance, swearing to be faithful to my Divine Master even unto death; that His enemies shall be my enemies, His friends my friends, and that my whole life shall be conducted according to His pattern and the laws of His Gospel. I believe in the blessed Jesus as the Christ of God, as the only Saviour of the world, as the light, the resurrection, and the life of men. I most humbly

resign my understanding, my will, and every passion and power of my nature, to be sanctified, controled, and directed by Thee. Take into the arms of Thy love a distressed soul, who flies to Thee alone for salvation and hope. Write my name in the Book of Life, support me under all troubles, strengthen me for all conflicts, carry me safe through all the difficulties and dangers of my present state, and at last present me faultless before the presence of God with exceeding *triumph* and *joy*.

And forasmuch as I am utterly unable by my own strength, to keep the covenant I have now made, and to perform what I have promised, I here also most humbly dedicate myself to the holy and ever-blessed Spirit. My body I most thankfully devote to be his temple, and every power of my *soul* I resign to his influence. May He descend and ever dwell in me, and so entirely possess me, that every appetite and passion, thought and imagination of my heart, may be made perfectly conformable to the image and will of God, that I may daily grow up into a meetness for the mansions of the blessed above. And now blessed be God, who hath inclined me to enter into this covenant, and blessed be his name who, I trust, will enable me to keep it, in humble dependence on

the promised aids of his Spirit through Christ, my all-powerful and compassionate Redeemer. I will now subscribe my name, and call heaven to witness my sincerity therein. O that the covenant I now make on earth, may be ratified in heaven. Affix blessed Saviour, who art the Mediator of the New Covenant, Thy signet thereto, and now seal by Thy Spirit, both my body and soul to that everlasting redemption for which, according to Thy promise, I believingly wait. *Amen and Amen.*

"*Signed and sealed, this 26th. day of April,* 1820. } THOS. BUSH."

"MY SPECIAL COVENANT."

"O Lord! I bless Thy Holy Name, that Thou hast inclined my heart to enter into this most solemn covenant with Thee. Thou hast sorely afflicted my body, but not more than I have justly deserved. "Why should a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his sins." Righteous art Thou O Lord; yet O Lord, let me plead with Thee. If Thou wilt be pleased for Thy dear Son's sake, remove this affliction, and give me a comfortable degree of health,

so as to be enabled to serve Thee again publicly. I most solemnly vow in the name of the *Father*, and *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and through the especial assistance of Grace, to give myself to Thee in a very special manner. I take Thy interest as my interest, Thy cause as my cause, Thy people as my people, and Thy glory as my end. I most solemnly engage through Thy Divine assisstance, to labour for Thee, in endeavouring to promote Thy spiritual kingdom on earth, as others who have families labour for them, and strive to settle their children in the world. O give me grace to live to Thy glory, and pursue Thy interest in the world, as I should do for my children hadst Thou blest me therewith. To this in Thy strength, begging Thy special assistance, I most solemnly, as in Thy Divine presence, subscribe my name this second day of June, 1820.

"THOS. BUSH."

The following, which is stated to be the *last Sermon* which Mr. Bush preached, we add, with the persuasion that it will, by his friends, be valued as a curiosity. It was written, at the request of a

friend, after it was preached. When it is considered that Mr. Bush discontinued preaching for more than thirty years before his death, it will not be taken as a specimen of what his preaching would have been had he continued its exercise. There are, however, some important truths strongly expressed.

"*And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.*"—(Isaiah xxix. 11-12.)

"It is evident, to all who know anything of the Scriptures, that the Jews were a highly favoured people; distinguished, for many ages, above all other nations for their spiritual privileges,—for unto them 'pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, *Christ came.*' Yet, notwithstanding these great advantages, they did not make suitable returns, but became dark in their understandings, perverse

in their wills, and earthly and carnal in their affections. The prophet therefore seems astonished at their degeneracy, stupidity, and blindness, and cries out, 'Stay yourselves and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, *but not with wine;* they stagger, but not with strong drink.—(v. 9.) 'For the Lord,' on account of their unfaithfulness, 'hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets,' whose office and business it was to awaken them, and teach them the will of God, even *'the prophets and your rulers, the seers, hath he covered.'* Then follow the words of our text: 'And the vision,' &c. In speaking from these words we shall, by the Divine assistance, assert three propositions contained in, and obviously deducible from the text,—I. The word of God, in its spiritual and saving import, is a sealed book to the natural man.—II. Various comments are put on it by such, to keep themselves content in a false peace and hope.—III. In order to understand it savingly and experimentally we must receive the Holy Spirit of God, to enlighten our understandings, and to regenerate and sanctify our hearts.

I. A natural man has senses and faculties exercised on natural and created things only,—his spirit

or soul is *alienated* from God, through the ignorance that is in him. In the things of this world he is keen and clear sighted, because his earthly fallen soul is engaged with ardour on earthly things—his spiritual senses are shut up—he is surrounded with the Deity, yet he is unconscious of His presence. The Apostle declares, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; *neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*'

Nor will human learning, excellent and desirable as it is, help him; for that is but the effect of natural faculties improved by study and exertion. He may have a liberal education—he may be versed in Philosophy—and remain a stranger to an experimental knowledge of God, a slave to earth and unholy passions.

A literal and critical knowledge of the Holy Scriptures themselves is not enough to enable him to understand them spiritually: this is particulary pointed at in our text and context, for the '*prophets*' *and* '*seers*,' who, no doubt had a literal and critical knowledge of the Scriptures, were involved in the general delusion and blindness; and the learned Scribes and Pharisees, in the days of our Lord, were striking proofs of this.

A man, by custom and education, may form his creed and religious opinions, and get a habit of formal devotion, but the Bible may be to him a sealed book; he may never spiritually and savingly feel the doctrines he has been taught to believe as literally true.

Deliver the book of God to the above characters, and ask them to explain to you the following essential doctrines of Christianty, such as 'Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;' 'Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love;' 'Christ in you the hope of glory;' or, 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God:' I say, ask them the meaning of any of the above plain passages of scripture, they are staggered, and are ready to say in the language of our text, 'I cannot, for it is sealed.' But since they cannot deny them as false, seeing they are plain declarations of scripture, we are brought,

II. To show the different efforts natural men make to explain away these fundamental truths. And the *first* is, that we were 'born again' when we were baptized. There are so many arguments which may be brought to show the folly and absurdity of this destructive error, that it would swell this sermon

to an enormous length to notice half of them; but we will mention a few.

The Church of England, in her catechism, defines Baptism as 'an *outward and visible sign*, of an inward and spiritual grace;' she tells us that the outward and visible sign is 'water,' but the inward and spiritual grace is 'a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.'

Again, let us, for a moment, substitute the word baptism for the new Birth, in those Scriptures where the term occurs, and we must at once see its absurdity. The Apostle John declares, 'He that is born of God doth not commit sin,' and he adds, 'he cannot sin because he is born of God.' But can we say, 'He that is *baptized* doth not commit sin—he cannot sin because he is *baptized*.' Universal experience gives the lie to the assertion. How many baptized adulterers, whoremongers, Sabbath breakers, thieves, and every other class of sinners, are to be met with; so that the cutting language of Dr. Young may be too truly applied:—'Ye baptized infidels—ye worse for mending—wash'd to fouler crimes.'

2. Others will explain away the spiritual and experimental import of such passages, by applying them to an outward reformation of life only. If

so, instead of life and immortality being more clearly brought to light by the Gospel, it is the reverse. The Jews, under their dispensation, taught that outwardly wicked characters could not enter the kingdom of heaven without repentance, whereby they forsook sin, accompanied with an universal reformation of life, which is clear in very many passages of Scripture in the Old Testament. Therefore, to express what was plain before, by the phrases 'new birth' or a 'new creation,' if no more than a reformation of life was meant, was doing much harm, and unworthy the character of the Saviour of the world. The terms 'new birth,' 'new creature,' 'regeneration,' imply an inward change, a change of principle, of motive; in a word, a radical change in the understanding, will, and affections; influencing the whole of our inward tempers and outward conduct; directing us to a right end by right means.

3. Some will literally make use of the language of our text, and say, 'I cannot for it is sealed,' i. e. these are too deep things for us to pry into, it will only puzzle and distract our minds, and if we do our best, God is merciful, and there is no doubt but we shall do well. Such excuses are strong reflections on God himself;—would a God of infinite wisdom

and love, reveal His will to His creatures in order to perplex and puzzle them, so that the more they sought to know it, the greater would be their perplexity and unhappiness? or would He strongly inculcate the necessity of a new birth a new creation, a being sanctified and made holy—which terms, as a mighty current, run through the whole of the Scriptures, but no where so strongly as in the New Testament, the last and most glorious dispensation,—if these were things we were not bound to understand and experience? On your ground, the more sincere and earnest a person was to save his soul, the more perplexed and unhappy he would necessarily be.

4 Many to make short work will say, this was all enjoyed in the Apostles' days, and we are not to expect miracles. Thus, confounding the miraculous and ordinary operations of the Spirit, which latter were to continue to the end of the world. Are not men as unholy now as they were eighteen hundred years ago? was there a sin committed then that is not committed now? (except bowing down to the stock of a tree.) And is not the Almighty the same in the Perfections of His Nature? Is not His written Word the same? and does it not as much require repentance, faith, and holiness now as then?

Besides, the Apostle plainly expresses what was to abide or remain in the Christian Church. 'Now *abideth* faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.' Now ask the most spiritual and experienced Christians, who know their sins forgiven, who rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and who have the earnest of heaven in their hearts, ask them in what their experience consists, and they will say, in faith, hope and charity. Faith gives them an assurance of the Divine favour, Hope eyes the certainty of the accomplishment of the promises, and causes the crown to shine bright in prospect, and the effect of this faith is love, the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto them, and the love of our neighbour sweetly reigning in our hearts through the same principle.

5 We have another objection. 'The book is delivered to one who is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned,' i. e. I am no scholar. This is the common excuse of thousands of the poor, to ward off the conviction, that they are destitute of religion and must seek to attain it. But is not religion the grand end of life? If we live and die without it we shall for ever have to

curse the day we were born. And if on your own ground, learning is essential to religion, are you striving to attain it? do you employ every spare moment from necessary labour in its acquirement? you do if your present excuse is sincere. Rather do you not lounge away your time in idleness if not in wicked company, at the ale bench, or the gin shop, and then if a person inquire of you concerning the salvation of your soul, you hypocritically cry out, 'I am not learned,' i. e. I am no scholar. Perhaps you have children; if you think learning essential to religion, of course you are anxious to make them scholars, even if you forego many of the necessaries of life. But are there not many with this excuse in their mouths, as careless about their childrens' learning and piety, as though they had no souls to be saved. Perhaps their children are seen in filth and rags running the streets, while the money which should be expended on their comfort and education, is spent in intemperance if not in debauchery. I am at a loss for language to paint in proper colours, the guilt of such characters. They are enemies to God, enemies to their children, enemies to themselves; and if they repent not, will be herded with the deepest damned in hell. But I hasten to our

III. Proposition, viz.: That in order to understand the Scriptures savingly and experimentally, we must have the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures are so full and express on this great truth, that to avoid swelling this discourse beyond proper limits, I can only refer to those parts in point. All through the five books of Moses, which give us the history of the Antediluvians and the Israelites, we have ample proof that their obedience and piety, were through obeying the teachings and strivings of the Holy Spirit of God. And when they grieved the Holy Spirit by their repeated transgressions, the Almighty tells them, previous to their being given up to God's judgments, His Spirit shall no longer strive with them; (see also Job xxxii. 8, Psalm li. 10 11, Rom. viii. 5 to 16, I Cor. ii. 10 11 12 &c., Gal. iii. 2, v. 16 17. Eph. vi. 17 18.) We are commanded by the apostle not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. And the new birth, as explained by our Lord in the third chapter of John, is expressly declared to be the operation of the Holy Spirit. But the scriptures are so express and full on this point, that it is needless to add quotations.

The Church of England likewise is clear on this fundamental point, both in her Liturgy, Articles,

and Homilies; which I have not time to enumerate. See the prayer for the King and Royal Family, likewise for the clergy, Collects for Christmas Day, Sunday after, five Sundays after Easter, Sunday after Ascension Day, Whit Sunday, Monday in Whitsun-week, and many others. See also 13th article, homily for Whit Sunday, &c., which plainly show that our holy Reformers maintained that the influence of the Holy Spirit was essential to work grace in the hearts of men, and bring them to a state of salvation.

And indeed, when, as the Church of England expresses it, the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit descend into the soul, all such excuses as those contained in our text are laid aside. Then the scriptures are no longer a 'sealed' book. The person feels himself a fallen creature, a sinner before God; he sees, clear as the noonday sun, the necessity of a new birth, a new creation; and seeks with his whole heart, redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and obtaining this great and inestimable privilege, 'the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the *Holy Ghost* given unto him,' and 'he rejoices in hope of the glory of God.' He is now in possession of that spirit which the apostle declares 'searcheth all

things, even the deep things of God.' We proceed to make a short application.

The grand obstacle to receiving the Holy Spirit is in the perverseness of men's *wills*, and not the want of disposition in the Almighty to impart it, or human learning to prepare them for it. God himself declares, 'If *any* man *will* do his will he *shall* know of the doctine, whether it be of God.' He declares, 'A way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err' in the way to heaven. Our Lord gives the same reason. 'Ye *will not* come to me that ye might have *life*.' No, we are willingly ignorant, we love sin, we love the world, we are unfaithful to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and madly go on in wilful delusion, until hell awaken us to curse our folly. You who have opened your hearts to the strivings of the Spirit, O foster and guard his holy motions. In his first operations he convinceth of sin, and keenly reproves us. But the drawings of the Father lead to the Son, bring us to the foot of the Cross, and through faith we receive the Spirit as the Comforter so gloriously promised by St. John; and if we continue faithful to his holy influences, will lead us into the possession of holiness on earth, and inconceivable felicity in glory everlasting."

The following was addressed to the members of his Class, when he was partially recovered from a severe illness.

"TO THE MEMBERS OF MY CLASS."

"*Lamborne, 5th June,* 1843."

"My dear Brethren,

I had fully intended to have met my dear Class this evening, but find myself, this afternoon, so much worse, that I am obliged, very reluctantly, to decline it. Rest assured that you have all a special interest in my heart and in my prayers, and I do most solemnly beg of one and all to give yourselves afresh to God, and to seek to live under a clear sense of your interest in Christ. This will be both an anchor and a cordial to your souls at all times, and particularly in time of trial and temptation. In all you do, keep a single eye—act in all things with an eye to God and eternity. I have spent many happy hours with you in that vestry, and we have felt a special sense of the Divine presence while thus assembled together in His name. If I should be spared a little longer, I trust we shall be again instructed and comforted by the mutual faith both of you and me, and that our future meetings will be more

abundantly favoured with the Divine presence. If I should be taken away, I do most solemnly charge and exhort you all to meet together, and endeavour, each and all endeavour, 'to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.' Let nothing ever tempt you to leave God and His people, but still pray on—believe on—work on, under a deep sense of your own nothingness and helplessness; but with humble, yea strong confidence in the love of God in Christ, and in His word, character, attributes, providence and grace, working in, with, and by all.

If I am saved, and I believe I shall, all my trust is and will be in Christ, just as much as the thief on the cross, as the vilest of the vile. I can truly say I depend on nothing of myself, either past, present, or to come. I entirely look to Jesus, and to the whole character of God in Him, as revealed in His holy word; this is a strong rock—a sure refuge both in life and in death. I only wish I had been more faithful and more holy, but in all this I fly to Jesus, and still have peace. Nothing will do but a coming to Jesus, and being grafted in Him and united to Him, and in sincerity of heart, and under the influence of His grace and Spirit, living devoted to His glory. This, and only this, will stand the test of life, death, and eter-

nity. All who thus act will persevere through all the trials of life, and die in the Lord.

I most heartily bless God that He, in his gracious providence, brought me to Lamborne. In this happy and highly favoured place He has revealed to me a knowledge of myself, and of Him whom to know is life eternal. I most heartily bless God for all His mercies, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And now, my dear Brethren, I most solemnly 'commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' I feel assured of your prayers, I need them and value them, and I look forward in hope of spending a happy eternity together in the realms of blessedness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I remain,

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

THOS. BUSH."